

## How to Be a Great Secret Sister

You've decided to join a Secret Sister program, and you've been assigned your new "sister". After reading over her questionnaire filled with favorites, likes and dislikes, and interests, you are stumped. How can you shower this new friend with thoughts, prayers and small gifts without really knowing her? How do you remain anonymous as well?

1. Review her questionnaire thoroughly. Familiarize yourself with her interests and hobbies. Do ideas immediately pop out to you? Jot down some thoughts on what to purchase for her or what notes you might write.
  2. Mark specific dates on your calendar. Include her birthday, anniversary and other special dates. Don't let a special event pass without sending a small note or card. Make a note to yourself to keep regular contact. For example, mark every other Wednesday on your calendar as a date to mail a small note or gift.
  3. Identify your secret sister. You might already know her, but if she is someone you don't recognize, have someone point her out to you. Note where she sits, who she socializes with and how she appears. Does she socialize a lot or is she quieter? These little facts will help you best serve her.
  4. Emphasize notes and contact over gifts. It is important to surprise her with a few, well thought-out gifts, but don't overwhelm her. Instead send regular notes, encouraging her and letting her know that you are praying for her. She will be able to contact the program coordinator as well with specific prayer requests or struggles that will be passed along to you. If she spoke or sang at church, compliment her performance. If you heard her child excelled at a sporting event, congratulate her and her child in a small note.
- Choose thoughtful gifts over elaborate gifts. It truly is the thought that counts. Let her know that you have chosen her gift specifically with her in mind. Use the questionnaire to your advantage.
  - Think out of the box. Don't just choose obvious gift choices off the questionnaire. Consider small gifts that she didn't mention but that she would like. If she mentions that she enjoys singing, what about a new praise and worship CD? If she enjoys reading, choose the latest Christian novel.

5. **Combine favorites.** She loves chocolate and her favorite fruit is cherries. Purchase a small bag of chocolate covered dried cherries or a specialty coffee flavored with chocolates and cherries.
6. **Think parallel.** She has marked that she likes knitting and that her favorite magazine is Woman's Day. You know that she reads magazines so purchase a knitting magazine as a small gift. It fits her interests but wasn't something she specifically asked for.
7. **Remain secretive.** Arrive early or stay late to leave your note or gift. Have a friend deliver your gift for you. Send mail to her house for an extra surprise.
8. **Reveal yourself at the end of the program and offer one last gift.** Choose a special gift and add a note telling her that you have considered it a privilege to learn more about her and to have prayed for her over these last few months. Extend an offer of coffee or lunch so you can get to know each other face-to-face.