

KATE MINUS 8

Reality television star Kate Gosselin visits Raleigh – uncustomarily alone – to say, “Hi Ya’ll” and promote her books.

Photo and Article By Kristy Stevenson

Do you watch the TLC juggernaut Jon & Kate Plus 8? Can you name all eight children from the show in birth order? And do you snicker when anyone asks if it’s okay to give gum to a two-year-old? If you have access to a television or the internet, you likely know all about Jon, Kate and the whole Gosselin family.

Their season five premier acknowledged that life’s about choices – and Jon & Kate recently made very different ones. Despite highly documented marital woes, they continue to come together for the sake of their children.

In April, Kate Gosselin appeared at the Southern Women’s Show promoting the just-released *Eight Little Faces: A Mom’s Journey*, as well as *New York Times Bestseller Multiple Blessings: Surviving to Thriving with Twins and Sextuplets*. The latter introduced Kate as someone real, down-to-earth, and in survival mode – qualities that ignited a fan base and first attracted me to the show.



The crowd thickened as the stage was set. As announcers repeated her name, people seemed to come out of the woodwork searching for last minute seats that didn’t exist. It was obvious we were there to see more than just another mom – Kate Gosselin was a bona fide celebrity.

Dressed in Ann Taylor and a pair of sassy pink heels, she greeted the crowd in her familiar Pennsylvania lilt with a hearty, “Hi ya’ll!” Relaxed and sophisticated, she took questions from a packed house and signed autographs on photos, books, magazine covers and DVD cases. I studied

this woman I'd welcomed into my living room week after week. She was different without the chaos of children under foot – but aren't we all?

Gosselin fielded questions about twins Cara and Mady who are currently in the third grade, and sextuplets Aaden, Alexis, Collin, Hannah, Joel, and Leah who attend junior kindergarten. The kids are stars in their own right, often stealing the spotlight with a simple mispronunciation. Aldergator (alligator), hair pain (airplane), and unnawears (underwear) have become part of my family's vocabulary!

Queries continued on everything from their new house, the dogs, other family members, organic shopping on a budget, to why they agreed to do the show in the first place.

Hannah Lynes traveled from High Point, NC with her toddler just to see Gosselin. "I never thought I'd actually get to meet the woman whose family I've come to love," she said. "And Kate uses healthy recipes which I'm always looking for."

Those recipes, in fact, are an integral part of the Gosselin brand as TLC is filming an episode on Kate's diet and exercise – and she has a third book, *Love Is in the Mix: Making Meals into Memories*, due in October.

With fame often comes scrutiny, but Gosselin has learned to tune out other people's opinions. Love her or hate her, Kate Gosselin is a force to be reckoned with. "As a mom I'm doing the best thing for my kids at all times, and that's all that really matters," she smiled.



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