

Putting Out the Gossip Fire

“Backbiting quenqueth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul.” —Bahá’u’lláh

Like a wildfire, gossip, rumors, and backbiting can spread rapidly and cause trouble for everyone in their path. Talking negatively about people behind their backs can be a form of bullying. It hurts feelings, damages friendships, and can harm people who have done nothing wrong. It’s like starting a fire. You don’t know how far it will spread, and it can be a cycle that’s hard to stop. If someone gossips *with* you, they could gossip *about* you, too.

How do you know what is and isn’t gossip or backbiting?

Think about how you’d feel if the person found out you said it. If you’d be sorry or embarrassed, don’t say it.

You can help stop the spread of negative talk. Start by telling your friends that you don’t like backbiting and you want to talk about positive things. If someone starts to backbite, try changing the subject, or say something kind about the person they’re criticizing. Don’t repeat negative talk that you hear. Put out the fire of gossip, and breathe fresh, clean air into your friendships.

Check out the kids below, and unscramble their orange words to help them stop the gossip.

KATE AND ANNE ARE SO MAD AT EACH OTHER.

THEY’LL (CRKWO) _____ IT
OUT. DO YOU
WANT TO GO
HIKING WITH ME?

JULIO’S PARENTS GOT A DIVORCE!

THAT’S SAD, BUT
I’LL LET HIM TELL
ME ABOUT IT IF HE
(DDEECISI) _____ TO.

KIRA DIDN’T COME TO THE SUMMER
CAMP BECAUSE HER FAMILY
DOESN’T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY.

WELL, IF THAT’S TRUE, IT’S
NONE OF MY (SSSNUBIE) _____

I HEARD ACE GOT
INTO ANOTHER FIGHT.

THAT’S JUST A RUMOR.
LET’S (AKTL) _____
ABOUT SOMETHING
ELSE. DID YOU KNOW
FROGS ARE GOOD
LUCK IN JAPAN?

OOH, GUESS
WHAT MIKE SAID
ABOUT ERIN?

JAKE WAS
TOTALLY
CHEATING
DURING OUR
GAME.

JAKE’S MY (RIDFEN) _____ . I
DON’T WANT TO HEAR
GOSSIP ABOUT HIM.

I’D RATHER
(SNELIT) _____
TO WHAT’S NEW
WITH YOU.

JAFAR’S RELIGION IS
WEIRD—THEY DON’T GO
TO A CHURCH LIKE US.

I LIKE TO KEEP AN (NEOP) _____
MIND.
ACTUALLY, I WANT TO
GO TO ONE OF THEIR
EVENTS SOMETIME.

I HEARD WE’RE ALLOWED
TO LIGHT FIREWORKS
WHENEVER WE WANT.

REALLY? WE SHOULD
(ECCHK) _____
WITH A COUNSELOR.