



## Q & A

**Q: I always find myself stuck in conversations with my friends that involve gossip. What am I supposed to do?**

**A: *Speak up.*** Let your friends know that the unkind words are hurtful and that no one is benefiting from the conversation.

***Be positive.*** Turn the conversation around by saying something nice about the person being talked about.

***Walk away.*** Don't encourage the conversation and don't be part of the problem by sticking around to listen.

**Q: What if I hear a rumor about myself?**

**A:** Whether there is some truth to the rumor or not, it can be very painful. Here are a few things you can do:

***Don't react quickly.*** Take a step back and control your emotions.

***Remain friendly and stay positive.*** Don't fall into the same trap as the person who spread the rumor.

***Speak with the person directly.*** While it may have been a complete misunderstanding, you might find that you have something to apologize for as well.

## INFO

Find us on Facebook!  
[www.facebook.com/GOYAministry](http://www.facebook.com/GOYAministry)



If you or someone you know is dealing with gossip and its consequences, speak to a friend, a trusted adult, or your parish priest.



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA  
 DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES  
 631 WEST END AVE., GARDEN APT., NEW YORK, NY 10024  
 PHONE: 646-519-6180 • FAX: 646-478-9385  
 WEB: WWW.YOUTH.GOARCH.ORG

### Books:

- *What the Church Fathers Say, Volume 1*, by George W. Grube, Light & Life Publishing, 1996.

### Online Resources:

- The Dangers of Gossip: <http://ymtoday.com/articles/2375/the-dangers-of-gossip>
- Take the Gossip Quiz: <http://christian teens.about.com/od/christianliving/a/gossipquiz.htm>

## GET THE FACTS

- Gossip is one of the oldest and most common ways that people share (unproven) facts, usually about someone else's personal life.
- People of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures use gossip as a form of communication, and studies show that it helps us navigate through social situations.
- Research says that people are influenced by gossip, even when it contradicts what they have seen with their own eyes.
- While we are used to basing our decisions on unproven facts, like gossip or rumors, remember that information drifts further from the truth as it travels from person to person.

# NAVIGATING THROUGH YOUR TEEN YEARS: DEALING WITH GOSSIP

## KNOW THE SIGNS

Normal interactions with your friends can easily turn into gossip sessions. What you say may influence how your friends perceive someone, whether good or bad, so it's important to think before you speak. Recognizing rumors about someone may be hard, but asking yourself some questions before adding your "two cents" could make a huge difference!

- Are you sharing information to make yourself look better?
- Is it harmful or degrading to the other person?
- Are you stretching the truth to make something seem more exciting?
- Are you revealing a secret that someone told you in confidence?
- Would you feel comfortable saying the same thing if the person was standing in front of you?

## THE CHURCH SPEAKS

**If you don't have something nice to say...** Well, you know the rest. St. Paul asks the same thing of us in his letter to the Ephesians, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).

**Don't be the spark!** Sometimes one careless word can cause enormous pain and create unnecessary problems, even if you weren't intentionally trying to hurt someone. St. James says, "The tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" (James 3:5). We can also find examples of this in the Old Testament when Solomon writes, "Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops" (Proverbs 26:20). Don't give gossip a place to live, because even the smallest spark can start a great fire. Unfortunately, it's contagious!

**You've got a friend—so act like one!**

Pretending to act one way in front of someone and turning against them after they leave is described in Psalm 41:6: "They visit me as if they were my friends, but all the while they gather gossip, and when they leave, they spread it everywhere." Make sure that you are an honorable friend, no matter who you are talking with!

**Show some humility.** We all know the common phrase "nobody is perfect," so why is it so easy to point out other people's flaws, but not our own? St. Basil says, "If you see your neighbor committing sin, take care not to dwell exclusively on his faults, but try to think of the many good things he has done and continues to do. Many times, by examining everything he has done, you will come to the conclusion that he is truly better than you." Instead of focusing on yourself, show some humility by lifting others up with respect and positivity.