

“At school, a lot of people curse and talk about immorality.

I want to avoid this bad language,

but it’s everywhere.

What can I do?”

It is difficult to be placed in a situation, such as school, where you have to overhear the bad language used in the halls or the vulgar conversations in the locker rooms. In many ways, it does seem to be everywhere. But there are a few things you can do about it.

First, and perhaps most important, make a real effort not to participate in such talk. Even if you are among friends and you know that they don’t know any better, set the example regarding what type of language is acceptable. Even if you are teased because you refuse to use vulgar words or swear, the only way to make a difference is to simply never give in.

Second, if you are among friends, let them know that the kind of language being used bothers you and that you would prefer they not talk like that around you. If they are truly your friends, they will usually make some effort to do as you ask. Selecting friends with similar standards in the first place is also a big help.

Third, there are times when you simply have to walk away or remove yourself from a conversation or area where the language is objectionable. It will take courage, but it may be the only way to get away from those things. As you continue to make good choices in your own speech, it will get easier to keep unacceptable words from popping into your mind or out of your mouth.

You will also need to replace any bad thoughts with wholesome and uplifting ones. Listen to good music; read and study the scriptures; attend seminary; listen to general conference. Doing these things will allow less room for unworthy thoughts to find place in your mind. **NE**

Choose Friends with the Same Standards



I usually choose friends who have the same standards I have. I just continue to use language that is clean and uplifts. Then I encourage others to do the same. Just stand in holy places and know that Satan cannot tell us what we can and cannot do.

Carl John T., 17, Saipan, North Marshall Islands

Stand Up for What You Believe



The best thing to do is to stay true to your standards and stand up for what you believe in. Explain to your peers that you can’t tolerate that sort of language. I did something similar with my friends, and they stopped the language. They respect me more for standing up for what I believe.

Thomas L., 19, Colchester, England

Keep Your Cool



People have noticed that I don’t curse, and they usually don’t do it around me. When they don’t stop, I just keep my cool and walk away.

Erica B., 16, Texas, USA

Replace the Language

You should tell your friends to watch what they say and replace the bad language with some good language.

Cameron F., 15, Washington, USA

Sing a Song



Every time I feel uncomfortable or hear things I don't want to think about, I'll sing songs in my head like "I Am a Child of God"

(*Hymns*, no. 301) or "Lead, Kindly Light" (*Hymns*, no. 97), which uplift me.

Katelyn N., 14, Pennsylvania, USA

Remember the Prophet Joseph Smith



Whenever I hear bad language, I remember when Joseph Smith was in jail and the guards were cursing and using vulgar language. Joseph told them that if they did not stop either they or he would die. They immediately stopped.

Liliana L., 18, California, USA

Editor's note: Read about Joseph Smith's experience at lds.org/go/122.

Ask Friends to Avoid Bad Language



When I first went into high school, some of the friends I made would swear or make inappropriate jokes. I politely let all of them

know that I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and would appreciate it if they would not use that language around me. They all respected my values, and if they ever let a bad word slip out, they would quickly apologize for what they said.

Brooke O., 16, New Hampshire, USA

Leave if Needed



At lunch, my friends started using bad language and talking about bad things. I did not like to hear that kind of stuff, so I just left.

Now my friends are careful to watch their language around me. If your friends truly are your friends, they will watch their language around you.

Caleb H., 14, Texas, USA

Don't Hang around Those Who Use Bad Language



There are two things you can do. The first thing is to just not listen. Pay attention to your work, and don't hang around the people

who use bad language. Another thing you can do is ask them to stop. Most every time they will respect you and stop. It actually works.

Delaney E., 13, Texas, USA

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.



ELIMINATE THESE WORDS

"As a normal part of everyday language, many people take the name of God in vain. Among our youth,

vulgar and crude terms seem to come easily as they describe their feelings. My young friends, now is the time to stand tall in eliminating these words from your vocabulary. You know the words to which I refer. Unfortunately, you hear them used over and over again in your schools, music, and sports. Will it take courage to stand tall? Of course it will. Can you muster the courage? Of course you can. Seek strength from your Heavenly Father to overcome it."

Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop, "Standing Tall," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 65–66.



The "No Cussing Club"

One young man's crusade to encourage clean language at school has spread to over 20,000 people. See a *Mormon Messages for Youth* video about his example at lds.org/go/123.

NEXT QUESTION

"Is having a boyfriend or girlfriend okay before age 16 as long as you are **not dating?**"

Send your answer and photo by February 15, 2012.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Material," and then select "Questions and Answers."

You can also write to us at newera@ldschurch.org

or

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