

This summer, our family celebrated the 10th birthday of our son, Dakota, with a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Puerto Rico. On the night of his birthday we went swimming in a bioluminescent bay that — thanks to millions of single-cell microorganisms — literally glowed with a blue light when the water was disturbed. In a moment that seemed almost sacred, the four of us held hands in a circle and expressed our hopes and wishes for Dakota by the light of his otherworldly, aquatic birthday candles.

With that memory fresh in our minds, last week we sent Dakota to his first Nobody's Fool.

Simply put, the reality is that many young people know enough about sex to — as the quote says — make them dangerous. At Nobody's Fool, they receive nonjudgmental, honest facts. They are encouraged to discuss with their parents, youth ministers, or other adults they trust.

Dakota is on the verge of one of the most exciting, confusing and defining periods of his life. We want to equip him with everything he will need to emerge as a strong, compassionate man with a deep capacity to love and respect himself and the people around him.

Taking Dakota to Nobody's Fool will give him the many tools that will help him embody those birthday wishes.

Robin and Doug McDurham
Waco

Thank goodness parents of Central Texas have the opportunity to get help with those difficult conversations about sex. As a parent who has sent my children to Nobody's Fool workshops, I am thankful they received accurate and straightforward information about their bodies. Children are bombarded with messages about sex — much of it misleading. At Nobody's Fool, children learn about the sometimes difficult changes of puberty, dealing with peer pressure, protection from sex abuse and many other important issues in navigating today's world.

Derrick Dickerson
Waco

Starting with the headline "Bishop's rush to judge" [July 11] and finishing with the accusation that Bishop Gregory Aymond is a hypocrite, *Trib* editor Carlos Sanchez could not be further from the truth.

The bishop did not "rush to judgment." He obviously deliberated and prayed over it diligently [before announcing that Catholics should not attend Nobody's Fool].

Should the church and the bishop be judged hypocritical because they refuse to lower the bar with respect to high moral standards and values?

Certainly the church has its problems with sexual abuse scandals in its clergy, but so has



Staff photo — Duane A. Lavery

Sixth-grade girls at Nobody's Fool prepare for an activity where they make bracelets with beads representing stages of the menstrual cycle.

every other denomination as well as most other institutions in our society.

Mr. Sanchez, if you are really a Catholic, then you should follow the magisterium of your church, and if you do not agree with him, contact the bishop privately.

McBride
Lorena

Many well-meaning people support educating children about sex. However, anyone supporting projects such as Nobody's Fool without first viewing the graphic sketches in the children's sex-training manual are somebody's fool.

Everyone has the right to his opinion. Here's mine: The *Trib*, a proud sponsor of Nobody's Fool, should print some of these graphic images for readers to see. Local supporting business owners should put the manual on the tables and counters of their businesses for the promotion of their passionate views to the patrons for whom they care so much.

Danny Passmore
Robinson

Sanchez (who sent his son to Nobody's Fool) thinks he is being "tainted" by Bishop Aymond's memo, but he seems to do a good job tainting himself. As a Catholic, Sanchez not only betrays an astonishing ignorance of his church's teaching on capital punishment and human sexuality, but he even resorts to libel against an innocent man (who happens to be his spiritual father) — all in an effort to vindicate his own parenting decisions.

One of the bishop's primary obligations is to protect his flock from wolves in sheep's clothing.

Michael P. Foley

I read Sanchez's cheap shot against Bishop Aymond in the *Austin American-Statesman*. Sanchez appears to be of the view that because of the mistakes made by the Catholic Church in dealing with the sin of sexual abuse of 1 percent of its clergy, the Catholic bishops have lost all moral authority.

I agree with Bishop Aymond. We Catholics are woefully unin-

formed about many things, and one of them is about Planned Parent-

hood's history and atheist agenda. Planned Parenthood's Nobody's Fool espouses a Godless world view.

Raul A. Gonzalez
Austin

I have a message for Bishop Aymond and [Pro Life Waco director] John Pisciotta: We are not stupid.

In 14 years of educating adolescents, I have learned that these young people are not stupid, either. They and their parents can make up their own minds about whose advice to follow in matters of sexuality.

Why do you have a problem with people having choices? I realize, as any educated person does, that abstinence is the only absolute guarantee against sexual mishaps. I encourage young people to do so. I know, however, that not all will remain true to the vow of pre-marital chastity.

Bishop Aymond and Mr. Pisciotta, are you so insecure in the correctness of your beliefs that you have to bully others into abandoning alternative beliefs? I urge you to consider the ultimate fate of bullies.

Isnela Mani
Waco

The bishop's and others' objections do not derive from

parental squeamishness in talking about sex. Rather, it is from the decided impression that Nobody's Fool propagates values and norms that are at a variance with traditional Christian teachings about sexuality.

Sanchez's apparent moral code — that the only ultimate truth that can be reliably asserted is that no ultimate truth can be reliably asserted — becomes the basis on which Sanchez himself "judges" Aymond.

He excoriates the bishop for failing to abide by the pluralist, tolerant gospel Sanchez ascribes to.

If taking a principled stand on an issue is the definition of "judging" someone, then Sanchez is at least as judgmental of the bishop.

Susan Colon
Hewitt

By Sanchez's logic, the church should lower the bar or water down its divinely bestowed doctrine every time one of its clerics commits a sin.

Were that the case, after 2,000 years of a church filled with both sinners and saints (as Christ had foretold), the Catholic Church would have nothing left to say.

Alexandra Foley
Waco

I don't understand why the media continue to put John Pisciotta in the limelight. As a parent, I feel Nobody's Fool is a wonderful presentation. The speakers are very conscious of the issues and are ready to field them at the appropriate time.

I have attended Nobody's Fool with my children for at least four years. I have had to shield them from the protesters in the parking lot. I feel I was being violated.

At no time have I seen any presenters at the conference display any materials as graphic as the protesters do. Parents, underwriters and others, continue to support it.

Peggy Roberson
Marlin

Letters