

URL: <https://anacondaleader.com/search/node/please%20don%27t%20make%20me>

By: Kasey Edge-Faur, Anaconda Leader Copy Editor

Too Much Information

Last week, as we were putting the paper together, I saw that the Montana Legislature is trying to pass SB 114, a bill that would require the Ten Commandments to be posted in all public school buildings in Montana.

I'm not particularly religious and I have nothing against those who are, but I think this bill is a bad idea, and that's not entirely because of the religious aspect.

For a state and legislature that seems so intent on protecting children from inappropriate and adult themes in books and in public schools, it seems weird to me that those same people would support a bill that introduces the concept of adultery to children as young as 5. I don't know about you, but I don't really feel like having the "What is adultery?" conversation with my future 6-year-old.

Don't get me wrong, many of the commandments are values that I think most reasonable people can agree on: don't murder, don't steal, don't lie, respect your parents. Of course I think children should learn those things.

But I don't think we need to be introducing school-age children to the concept of adultery in schools, especially when the legislature tried last year to limit sexual and LGBT themes in public schools and libraries (HB 324 in 2024) in the name of protecting children from obscenity. Is adultery not also obscene? Why is learning about people cheating on their spouses more okay than letting high schoolers read Romeo and Juliet?

Also, for those students who aren't Christian, the commandment "You shall have no other gods before me," could become particularly problematic if their classmates start telling them they're disobeying the Ten Commandments by not worshipping the Christian God and making them feel bad or wrong for growing up with a religion they didn't choose but was chosen for them by their parents or caregivers. It could create more bullying and ostracization for certain students.

If legislators want to promote morality in children, I don't think giving children another difference to find between them and their peers is the way to do it.

For one thing, teaching children to not lie, cheat, steal or harm others in a non-religious context would be a good start. For example, when I was in kindergarten, my teacher had the golden rule displayed on the walls of the classroom and started each day by reminding us of it. The golden rule is mentioned in the bible, but my teacher didn't tell us that, and the message to be kind still sank in.

In short, I want my children to have morals, but I don't think they need the Ten Commandments posted around their school to do it.