

Surprised by Sonic the Hedgehog

About a month ago my sister called with fantastic news: my 10-year-old niece landed the lead in *Oliver*. We were all excited, and John and I started talking about going as a family to see her perform.



[Flickr/Jeroen Krah](#)

Then it hit me. *Oliver* is about orphaned children growing up in poverty. I had no idea whether adoption-related issues would be portrayed in a way that we wanted our children to experience—especially at their age.

Stories about adoption can be wonderful for opening conversations. They can also be troubling as they perpetuate stereotypes. Do you let your children see movies like *Annie* where orphanages are portrayed in a negative way?



[Flickr/Eva Rinaldi Celebrity and Live Music Photographer](#)

After speaking with my sister and others, John and I decided to skip *Oliver*—not because of any discussion of orphans and adoption, but because the musical sounds dark and confusing for our young boys.

Then the other day Leo and Daniel were snuggled in our recliner, and they asked to watch a new TV show, *Sonic the Hedgehog*. They were under the weather, and I was working nearby.



[Flickr/Vagueonthehow](#)

All of a sudden something in the show caught my attention. The mother hedgehog was taking her three babies and placing them one by one on doorsteps, then fleeing into the darkness.

Um...what?

Very casually, I walked over and leaned against the recliner.

“Is that Sonic’s mother?” I said.

“Yes, Mama,” Leo said.

“I wonder why she can’t take care of her children herself,” I said.

There was no answer from the chair. Our boys were focused on the next scene, which was much more interesting, especially as the bad guys arrived and Sonic demonstrated his amazing speed.

Then, just as I was thinking the fact that the mother didn’t raise the children might just be a blip, there she was, hovering in the background. Apparently she helps them in subtle ways. She talks about their being reunited one day. And her children seem to be aware of her presence sometimes, and other times not at all.

It’s not my favorite show—forgive me if it’s yours—but I’ve watched more than I would have liked, mainly to see whether it raised any issues for our children. Our boys don’t seem to care about that part of the story at all. And even when I ask about it, figuring it might be a conversation opportunity, they shrug it off. They want to see Sonic stop the bad guys. They want to see him run. They want to hear Sonic’s band play.



[Flickr/Animaster](#)

“I never thought I’d have to worry about the premise behind *Sonic the Hedgehog*,” I complained to a friend one day.

“I think the biggest surprise,” she said, “is that *Sonic the Hedgehog* even has a premise.”

How right she is.

I’m joining [a group of wonderful bloggers](#) and posting every day this week! My fellow Catholic Review blogger Patti Murphy Dohn is also writing #7for7 and today she writes about [starting Catholic Throwback Thursdays](#).