
Let us not forget children always seek the good will, praise and love of others, and nothing is so certain to kill and destroy their ambition and spirit as fault-finding and scolding. *Father Flanagan*



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Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:
Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet

Year One—August

Excerpts from Father Flanagan's prayers

O Heavenly Father, we acknowledge with grateful hearts Your numerous graces and blessings bestowed upon us, as individuals and as a nation that is especially favored by You.

We are quite conscious, Dear Lord, of our unworthiness and inability to accomplish any good of ourselves, and hence recognize that all good comes through You, Our Lord and Master.

Teach us, Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, a deep sense of our duties and responsibilities not only towards our own children but all children who come within our reach of influence...Teach us, Dear Lord, to be unselfish, with our time and our talent...to set a good example by that unselfishness, and by our way of life, that we may set forth a pattern to the young...

Dear Lord, our children are so precious, so needed to be trained and developed into a citizenry that will be wholesome and constructive that all their thoughts, words and actions may be directed towards You and mutual service to each other, which will insure a safe and sane citizenry strong enough to protect it against the powers of evil. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. **Amen!**

*Cord, you have been our refuge
through all generations.
Fill us at daybreak with your love,
that all our days we may sing for joy.*

Psalm 90.1.14

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

Father Flanagan's letter of August 20, 1946 to Sister M. Immaculate, Sisters of Charity, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, Ireland, in which he responds to questions she asked him about the education and training of children. Part I of II

...the only thing that is important is the grace of God, love of God and love of our fellowman. Where love abides, the answer to all of the problems confronting adults and children is ever present. Love begets sacrifice, prayer is an expression of our helplessness to the God of Might, who is also the God of love. God never abandons a soul who is in great distress, particularly that soul who is so selfless as to plead with Him for somebody else. One does not have to be a great psychologist or psychiatrist to understand the essentials in the training of children. Where children have grown up and gone out into the world and have become misfits and ended up in prisons and jails rather than holding an honorable position in life, rendering service to God and man, these children have become misfits not because they were bad, not because they were recalcitrant, but because of the stupidity of adults, who through lack of love of God and their fellowman failed to make use of the greatest power given to man on earth, to be teachers.

...I hope that you and I have no misunderstanding about this punishment business. We punish by denial of privileges, not physically. Let's not talk about punishment at all, Sister, let's talk about 'correction,' that is, training by example, rather than preaching, more so by example. Children should not be scolded—"don't do this, don't do that"—rather give them something worthy of emulation.

Now, your questions. Those are very dangerous ages, between 12 and 14 for a boy or a girl, but they are the ages where beautiful characters are being developed. A child trained under the careful and sacred influences of our Holy Mother the Church is very fortunate, but many have been ruined because of lack of the things I have stated above. Again, let me state, training by example is very important.

Of course, the answer to the fourth question is that a stubborn child is a child who has been frustrated, who hasn't a friend in the world, in his own mind, or her own mind...a child who has been

dealt with severely somewhere down the line from the cradle up to now. The only approach that I know of to a stubborn child is again, kindness, love and understanding.

One must have unlimited patience with such children, and where human resourcefulness ends, the power of prayer will always bring forth a ray of hope. Again I say with the kindness and understanding of a teacher, and the guidance and spiritual direction of such a child, stubbornness should cease within a very short period of time, and rehabilitation and internal growth begin...

(For Part II of this letter, see Prayer Leaflet Year One—August)

FATHER FLANAGAN PRAYER

God of mercy, love and compassion, we are grateful that You gave Father Edward Joseph Flanagan special graces to love, protect and guide neglected, vulnerable and oppressed youth. Thank you that the work he began with the foundation of Boys Town, has continued to spread throughout the world. We pray that You inspire many to adopt his caring, loving ways as mentor and protector of youth.

Loving Father, we bring our own needs to you now, asking that through the intercession of Father Flanagan, in accordance with your Holy Will, you grant us these special favors: _____.

Thank You for Your Faithfulness and Providence, and for hearing these petitions which we ask in the Name of Your Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**