
No boy can escape his environment, but if he has any ambition and the right kind of idealism to inspire him, any boy can rise above his environment... The most important fact in the life of a boy is not his physical environment, important though it is, but the mental and spiritual drives which determine his attitude toward life.

- Fr. Flanagan
Boys Town Times, February 14, 1947



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DONATIONS

**We are a federally recognized
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Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:
Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet

Year Two—October

Father Flanagan's prayer for parents

O God, Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, look down with gracious eye on the fathers and mothers of this world. Teach us, Dear Lord, to know and understand the high position which we as parents hold in Your Divine Plan of Creation—the guardianship of Your precious little ones.

Give us Dear Lord, the strength and patience to teach by example and precept our precious children and lead them along the paths of virtues, onward and upward towards You, their loving and All Gracious God. All this we ask through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen

From his writing of April 1, 1946

Children are not born to be bad. They come unspoiled from the hand of God. It is our duty, as parents and members of society, to protect them from bad influences in the world where they grow to young womanhood and young manhood. We must not allow environmental influences to remove the look of hope which God has put in their eyes, nor the spark of enthusiasm which he has put in their hearts.

*The word of God is living and effective, able
to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.*

Hebrews 4.12

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

"Father Flanagan Says" — Boys Town Times, January 24, 1947,

Most important in the development of the personality of the child is the relationship between the child and its parents. Beginning at birth this relationship continues through puberty and adolescence, until the child reaches maturity and is ready to take its rightful place as a useful member of society.

During this period of socialization, which is only another term for growing up, the relationship that exists between the parents and the child is never a fixed, unchanging relationship. It is subject to many adjustments and readjustments. It cannot be anticipated apart from the many factors that are constantly changing with the intellectual and emotional development of the child.

The reasons for this is readily apparent to anyone who has worked with children. No two children are every exactly alike... nevertheless, there are certain psychological factors that are fundamental to the proper training of the child...the mental and emotional hungers in the child are fundamentally the same as those the parents feel as adults.

It is natural for the boy to look to his parents for that understanding which gives him a sense of security and for that nod of approval which gives him a feeling of confidence. Nagging and scolding make the boy feel insecure; they destroy confidence.

The appeal to fear is always a poor expedient. Fear in the boy is an evil thing, and wise parents will do all within their power to avoid it. The practice of whipping a boy into compliance with threats or with repeated assertions that he is lazy and will never amount to anything is nothing more than an appeal to fear. Instead of providing a common ground of understanding, it sets up a barrier between the adult and the boy.

If we understand the boy we will not expect too much of him. The boy is quite conscious of his inability to measure up at all times to adult expectations. He lacks experience. He cannot help it if he fumbles and make mistakes. He is gravely hurt if, after he has done his best, his only reward is ingratitude and censure.

We are horrified at the sight of an adult whipping a helpless child, but the psychological wounds caused by continual scolding and criticism do vastly more harm to the personality of the boy than physical punishment could ever do. Mental punishment is torture from which there is no escape. It leaves its scars on the mind of the boy.

Love and understanding are necessary to produce a socialized individual, by appealing to the boy's sense of importance, by cooperating with the boy, and by inviting his reciprocal cooperation and respect.

The first step in helping a boy to find his place as a member of the group is to show him you are on his side.

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.