

Parents who take the objective approach in the religious training of their children are simply being realistic. They do not need to sacrifice their parental dignity in order to recognize the dignity that attaches to the child any more than they have to distort religious concepts in order to put them in terms the child can grasp. The main thing is to catch the interest of the child, to stimulate his imagination, and to inspire his cooperation.

-Father Flanagan, October 9, 1947



**FOR INFORMATION OR TO REPORT FAVORS
GRANTED
CONTACT:**

Father Flanagan League
14057 Flanagan Blvd.
Boys Town, NE 68010

www.fatherflanagan.org

DONATIONS

**We are a federally recognized
501c3 nonprofit charitable organization
For religious purposes.
Donations may be made out
to FFLSD and sent
to the address above.**

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Father Steven E. Boes, Executive Director



Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:

Prayer Leaflet

Year Five-February

*Excerpts from Father Flanagan's **Prayer for Boys Town***

Dear Lord, You have built Boys Town on the spirit of Faith— Faith in You our God, and Faith in our fellow man as represented by the homeless and helpless, unloved and unwanted boys. This Faith has brought hope and the sunshine of love into the charred hearts and minds of these dear little ones, for they have basked within the sunshine of that love whose rays have penetrated the hidden and secret departments of their starved little hearts, revived and restored their functions.

Through Your tender kindness and great love for these children, You have, Dear Lord, developed them into noble and Christian souls. You have enriched them to the extent that they have become useful and good citizens in a world that has grown very sick through neglect of You. With their fine, sterling and Christian characters, they have set a splendid example before this sick world, an example that will accomplish much good for society and for You.

Continue to bless, Dear Lord, this Home, that Boys Town may continue to carry on its sacred mission of bringing hope and love to the neglected and unloved little ones of the nation...

All this we ask through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. **Amen.**

*Rise up, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand;
do not forget the oppressed.
You do see! Indeed you note trouble and grief,
that you may take it into your hands;
the helpless commit themselves to you;
you have been the helper of the orphan.*

Psalm 10.12-14

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

Guest Editorial, Denver Post, December 5, 1946, by Father E.J. Flanagan.

No boy wants to be bad. Boys sometimes do make mistakes, serious mistakes; but their mistakes are mistakes of the head, not of the heart. If they fail to do better it is because they have never learned to know better.

A few years ago a seven-year-old boy shocked an entire state with his daring. Carl's parents were terribly poor. Both the father and mother worked away from home. Carl, who should have been in school, was allowed to run the streets. It was not long before he was leader of a gang of boys, some of whom were twice his own age.

One day Carl walked into a bank, slipped more than \$200 in bills into his pocket, and walked out without being seen. The seven-year-old Carl was now a "big shot" in the eyes of his gang. His next move was to hold up a filling station with a gun he had made of wood. His crime career ended abruptly shortly after that when he walked into a candy store and said, "This is a stickup!" The kindly lady refused to take him seriously and the boy broke down in tears.

The story of Carl is typical of thousands of other unfortunate boys who get into trouble every year. These boys are not bad. They just don't know any better. In the background of each you will find a story of shocking neglect. The child is the innocent victim when parents are delinquent or when society fails to do its job.

Our aim at Boys Town is to take the homeless and neglected boy, the boy who is pushed around, and help this boy become a useful citizen. We make no distinctions of race or creed. They are all God's precious children. Every boy has a right to a chance to make the most of his life. All we ask is that the boy be in need of love, care and a wholesome environment.

One of the first things we do for the boy who comes to Boys Town is to make him feel we are on his side. The feeling that he is wanted is important to the character development of any boy. This is particularly true of the homeless, the neglected and the abandoned boy who has never known what it means to be loved. Many of these unfortunates drift into crime for no more reason than they have never known anything better.

Any program of citizenship training must be constructive to get results. The basis of such a program is love—love of God and love of our neighbor. There is more psychology in a wise mother's love than in

all the books ever written about child training. Give a boy a chance, show him you are on his side and give him a religious faith to tie to, and he won't let you down.

We do not claim to use any secret formula at Boys Town in preparing these homeless and neglected boys for service to God and country. We simply give the youthful citizen a positive attitude toward life and through his training in the classroom, the trade school and on the athletic field, prepare him so that upon graduation he is ready to face the world with confidence and make his own way.

One of the worst tragedies that can befall any boy is for him to have parents who are delinquent in fulfilling their duties as parents. The neglected boy begins life under a terrible handicap. It results in mental and emotional frustrations, and causes the boy to become over-inhibited or, going to the opposite extreme, to become inconsiderate, quarrelsome, bullying, impulsive, foolish, extravagant, indulgent.

My thirty years of experience in working with homeless, abandoned and neglected boys confirms my statement that no boy wants to be bad. Boys who get into trouble are mentally and spiritually sick. They need to be understood and helped, not condemned and punished.

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.**