A true leader of boys can appeal to their minds through their hearts. I know that you cannot really drive a boy, that you need not buy a boy, but that you must win him if you are to do anything with him or for him. I was convinced then, as I am convinced now, that no boy wanted to be bad.

- Fr. Flanagan

FOR INFORMATION OR TO REPORT FAVORS GRANTED CONTACT:

Father Flanagan League
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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.**

Photos, prayers, writings of Father Flanagan
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Father Steven E. Boes, Executive Director

Father Edward J. Flanagan

Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:

Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet *Year Six—April*

Father Flanagan's Prayer from March 27, 1943

Dear Lord, Boys Town has been built on the Gift of Faith—faith in You our God, and faith in our fellowman as represented by homeless boys. This Gift of Faith has brought hope and the sunshine of love into their once discouraged hearts and minds. Those rays of hope and love, based on this Gift of Faith, penetrated the most hidden and secret places of the starved hearts and souls of these children, restoring to them the normal functions which You, their Creator had intended. Through Your special solicitude and tender affection, You have developed these boys into noble and Christian young men. You have enriched them to become good and useful citizens in a world that is very sick through neglect of You. With fine, sterling and Christian characters, these young men so conduct themselves that they accomplish much good for society and for You.

Dear Lord, bless this Home that Boys Town may continue to administer its sacred service of bringing hope and love to the neglected and unloved little ones of the nation. Elevate and strengthen the spirit of Boys Town... Make us more worthy, Dear Lord, and more responsive to Your Grace that the work we do in Your Name and under the Special patronage of Your Immaculate Mother may be more and more acceptable to You and pleasing to Mary, our Patroness and Protectress.

All this, Dear Lord, we ask through Jesus Christ. Amen.

All-Powerful God, Help us to proclaim the Power of the Lord's Resurrection.

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

A letter written to Mrs. Harley J. Earl

July 15, 1939 (following his visit to her ranch in Sheridan, Wyoming) Part I

...In December, 1917, I borrowed ninety dollars to pay the first month's rent on a building, in which to house homeless and abandoned boys and give them the care, training, and education which I felt that they needed so that they might be able to accept and bear the responsibilities of citizenship. I had learned, in the "Workingmen's Hotel," that if they didn't receive it in youth, they would not have its results when they were older. I felt sure then, and I still feel sure, that if habits of industry and worthwhile character are not ingrained in children, they will not acquire them as adults. I decided to spend my life in saving boys from becoming misfits and recruits to the army of crime.

I had studied the program of our courts dealing with delinquents, and as far as I could see the only results were the constantly growing number of boys sent to the reform schools, and the additional expense of making reform schools larger. Then, as now, at least ninety percent of our adult criminals had started their careers as children, and I felt that there must be something radically wrong with a system which produced so many criminals. The economic and social loss to society was abhorrent.

I felt that there must be another way—the way of love and kindness—of training and teaching—of learning to do by doing. I was certain that erring and neglected boys could be trained by a system other than by bars and cat o'nine tails, and developed into worthwhile citizens, and I set out to do it in a most humble manner.

I had no financial backing, not even much sympathy, and certainly not much interest on the part of local citizens...My first two boys came from the juvenile courts, and three others, whom I had been befriending in my own small way to keep their bodies and souls together, I picked up off the streets. These first five boys were the real beginning of Father Flanagan's Boys' Home.

In the beginning, I had no very definite program outlined, but I did know the fundamentals of citizenship, and what was needed to develop the kind of character to meet the needs of that citizenship. I knew that with the boys whom I was to care for, I would have to have their good will, and that their good will could be won only through these boys accepting me as their friend. I felt that I must be worthy of that friendship, and, having won it, it was my greatest accomplishment, for then I was able to lead, not drive.

I am sure that this is a lesson which all our captains of industry have had to learn in one way or another. I knew that any success that I might have would depend on my ability to lead these boys, and to get their cooperation if I was to mold their characters and rehabilitate them.

A true leader of boys can appeal to their minds through their hearts. I knew that you cannot really drive a boy, that you need not buy a boy, but that you must win him if you are to do anything with him or for him. I was convinced then, as I am convinced now, that no boy wanted to be bad.

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.**