
Every child has some positive qualities. We owe it to our children to discover them, and emphasize them. —*Father Flanagan*



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DONATIONS

**We are a federally recognized
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Donations may be made out
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Father Edward J. Flanagan
Founder of Boys Town, Nebraska

Father Flanagan League:
Society of Devotion

Prayer Leaflet

Year Three—October

From Father Flanagan's prayer

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.

Elevate the spirit that made Boys Town possible during the past years. Strengthen that spirit that during this most trying year, we may be able with your grace to overcome the hardships and discouragements that always accompany this work.

Make us more worthy and more responsive to Your grace, that the work we do here in Your name and under the special patronage of Your Immaculate Mother, may be more and more acceptable to You—the God of Heaven and Earth—and pleasing to Your Immaculate Mother—Our Patroness and Protectress. All this we ask through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am meek and humble of heart;
and you will find rest for yourselves.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.*

Matthew 11.19-30

From Fr. Flanagan's writings

Father Flanagan sought to understand the roots of poor social behavior and to educate others in examining child-rearing methods that might work against the child's healthy development. This excerpt, "The Bully," is from a writing addressed to parents.

No child consciously sets out to pick up a set of habits which will give him difficulty in later life...The bullying boy becomes, to no small degree, a social misfit as a man.

Bullying, for all the apparent difference, is closely allied to anger. The boy exhibits temper because the exhibitions of it bring him some measure of satisfaction by way of recognition and attention. Bullying is an unpleasant means of achieving the same ends...We should want, and we should encourage our boy to stand up for his rights among his physical equals, and a reasonable amount of anger when his rights are traduced is to be expected. At the same time, he must respect the rights of others, and be as careful and perhaps as jealous of them as of his own. We should value courage, aggressiveness, and spirit in the youngster, but we must feel concern when these character traits exceed their proper limits. But as long as his own rights are not invaded, he should not be permitted to justify his impulse for recognition and attention by the use of his fists, or by causing pain of any sort to others.

Boys become bullies because they find, in bullying, some measure of satisfaction which has been denied them...We find bullies developed in an atmosphere of overprotection, and we find them as well in homes where strictness and intimidation seem to be the rule. They come too, from homes which bear neither of these stigmas.

...All children have the right to some self-assertion. They must be given the experience of choosing their own courses of action at least to some degree. How else can they learn to make choices? If this right is repressed...The easiest way in which he can attain a feeling of dominance, a measure of justification, is by imposing his will on some person or persons who, like himself is powerless to strike back. His bullying will earn him a measure of respect, a poor sort of respect it is true, but any respect at all is better than none.

On the other hand, it is frequently the over-protected, the indulged, and the so-called "spoiled" child who develops into a bully. Why? Any sort of mollicoddling engenders an uncomfortable feeling inside a real boy. He feels subconsciously that he is not quite as self-sufficient as he would like to be. If he receives an undue measure of attention which he does not deserve, he feels a sense of frustration. Boys like the rewards which come of honest effort, and they like the experience of earning them. They feel denied if this experience is withheld. Add to these thoughts the proposition that whatever he does will be excused and glossed over. Instinctively, he wants, deep down in his heart, to be loved and respected for

himself. He has a rather accurate estimation of his own worth. He feels himself really to be somebody, but he feels also that he has to do something to prove it. That something often is bullying.

Both intimidation and over-protection are dangerous, and prejudicial to the mental health of the boys. In the first instance, over-protected children may actually take pleasure in the pain they inflict, for the somewhat paradoxical reason that they never experience it themselves. Intimidated children may resort to it because they consider the infliction of pain the prerogative of the adults they hope to become...

A sensible approach to all child problems will be most effective in anticipating and preventing the rise of any bullying tendencies...Every child has some positive qualities. We owe it to our children to discover them, and emphasize them. If the boy has an artistic talent, encourage him to develop it. Praise his every effort. Let that be the means of his self-justification...

For his own part, the boy will do everything which he sees as possible to gain the attention and recognition which is his birthright. It is only when he has exhausted every means he can think of to gain it, that he will turn to unsocial methods of achieving it...

There is a wealth of genuine and solid worth in every boy who was ever born into the world. It is (our) task to plumb his depths, without his being conscious of it, and bring the best that is in him to the surface. What (we) achieve will be reflected in his measure as a man...

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.