

Study Guide

Heart of a Servant: The Father Flanagan Story

High School Study Guide

1. Father Edward Flanagan was born in the village of _____
in the country of _____.
2. As a child, Edward (“Eddie”) played an important role on his family’s farm. What responsibilities did he have?
3. In what year did Edward Flanagan immigrate to the United States, and how old was he at the time?
4. Edward was described as being highly intelligent. By the time he entered college, he was able to speak, read, and write in _____ different languages.
5. Edward struggled with serious health issues throughout his childhood and young adulthood. These health challenges interfered greatly with his pursuit of the _____.
6. After his ordination, what was Father Flanagan’s first priestly assignment?
7. While serving in Omaha, Father Flanagan encountered troubling conditions on the city’s streets. What did he observe, and how did these experiences inspire his mission to serve homeless and neglected boys?

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8. In the year _____, construction began on land that eventually became the village of _____. What was Father Flanagan's vision for this community?

9. In 1934, Boys Town reached a major milestone with the establishment of a _____ on its campus.

10. The prevailing social theory that Fr. Flanagan fought against was _____, which is a pseudo-science that taught that there were "bad boys" based on race, color, and religion.

11. Father Flanagan was not only concerned with teaching practical life skills. He ultimately wanted the boys to become _____.

12. Boys Town began to receive national attention through newspapers and radio broadcasts. A story about a mayoral election within Boys Town caught the attention of a Hollywood producer. What film was released in 1938 as a result, and how did it impact public awareness of Boys Town?

13. Father Flanagan advocated for social reform and child welfare. He believed systems should be more _____ based rather than _____ based.

14. Which U.S. President asked Father Flanagan to assist with efforts to build post-war peace?

15. Fr. Flanagan died from health complications while on a trip to Berlin, Germany. Where is his final resting place?

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Reflection Questions

1. How did Boys Town differ from other institutions for troubled youth at the time?
2. The prevailing social theory that Fr. Flanagan fought against was “eugenics.” What is eugenics? What did it teach? In contrast, what was Fr. Flanagan’s main belief about ‘bad boys’?
3. Throughout the documentary, Fr. Flanagan demonstrates key Catholic virtues. Identify two specific examples that show how he lived out the “heart of a servant,” and explain why they are meaningful.
4. What lasting impact did Fr. Flanagan have on the world, both during his life and after his death?
5. Does Fr. Flanagan remind you of any other people in your life? Or, do you know any priests who remind you of Fr. Flanagan? If so, how?