



FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

THOUGHTS FROM GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN

The Original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home

Learn to Teach Generosity During the Holidays

Father Val J. Peter, JCD, STD (NAPSA)—The holiday season is a perfect time to teach our children how to be generous.

Like everything else we teach our children, learning to be generous does not always have an immediate impact, but it will pay dividends for generations.



Val J. Peter

It is good to point out to our children all the wonderful things they have in their lives compared to other children who have so little. Look at the children of Sudan.

Some children might respond, "Mom, you are making me feel guilty." Your response should not be about guilt. It should be, "No, I am helping you become generous."

Explain why it is good to be generous, and that generous kids do not grab, shove and push so they can be first in line or have the first hamburger or the biggest piece of cake. Generous kids share what they have with those who have less.

A song from the Depression goes like this: "We ain't got a barrel of money...But we're traveling along, singing a song, side by side." I like to teach that to our children. The fact that we have each other is important. It fills a void in our lives neither the biggest nor best of things can fill.

Years ago in high school, there was a young teacher whose simple act of spontaneous giving made a big impact in my life.

I was working in the lunchroom. I forgot my sack lunch and did not have a dime to buy a hot dog. This teacher noticed. He said, "Wait a minute, Val." Then he went into a private dining room and came out with a ham sand-

wich. I hardly knew him, yet he cared enough to do that for a stranger. I remember going over to church that day, kneeling down and for the first time saying: "Lord, make me a giver like that."

Here are some ways to make this holiday season a time for your family to experience real giving:

- Even when your children don't have everything they want for themselves, teach them to give to others.
- Before taking a cookie or snack for themselves, teach your children to pass the cookies to others first.
- Teach your children to feel sorry for others, not just for themselves.
- Teach your children to help others even when others don't help them.

At the start of each day, ask your children to do one act of generosity. At supper, find out what it was and heap praise on your children for doing these things. Eventually, teach them the acts of kindness are not for praise or feeling good about ourselves, but to take pride in being kind, generous and making the world a better place.

Heaven knows a generous spirit is something we all admire.

Girls and Boys Town, the original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, is a leader in the direct treatment and care of abused, abandoned and neglected girls and boys. Through 19 sites across the country, the organization directly cares for more than 37,000 girls and boys annually.

Girls and Boys Town also assists 1.5 million children and parents through its National Hotline (1-800-448-3000), outreach and training programs and community partnerships.

