

EXCERPTS FROM COMPASSION WEBSITE

<https://www.compassion.com/for-sponsors/write.htm>

<https://www.compassion.com/letter-writing/write-my-child.htm>

So...you want to write a letter to your sponsored child.

- Because you want to be a “good” sponsor.
- You want the letter to be perfect.
- And you want to stop feeling guilty for not writing.
- You want to let your sponsored child know how special she is and that God loves her.
- You want to give this letter-writing thing one more chance.
- You want to say just the right inspirational thing to change your sponsored child’s life.
- You want to get the letter writing over with.
- But you just can’t get started.

You want to write. You plan to write. But you never get around to doing it. It’s almost like you don’t know how to write a letter to a child.

There’s no formula for writing a letter to your sponsored child. We have letter-writing ideas and letter-writing prompts for you. And we have plenty of reasons for why you should write, but honestly, all this can get to be a bit too much. It can be paralyzing. Or it can just feel too time consuming and not really worth the effort.

Here are some thoughts to keep in mind when you’re thinking about writing a letter to your child. Hopefully, they’ll help you beat procrastination and overcome the hurdles that keep you from sending a letter.

Write Something. Anything.

What you say doesn’t matter as much as just saying something. **Don’t worry about length or content.** Even a quick, “Hello, I am thinking about you today!” or “God loves you” can mean the world to your child.

Asking Questions Counts as Saying Something.

What is your favorite color? What games do you like to play? What would you like to be when you grow up? Ask your child simple questions to get a conversation going, and be sure to answer any questions they might ask about you.

You're Not Writing a Cover Letter, College Entrance Essay or Shakespearean Sonnet.

It's okay to write like you speak, digress, use simple words and dot your I's with hearts. Don't over think things. Just be you. There's a reason God connected you with your sponsored child, and it wasn't to put the weight of responsibility around your neck.

You Don't Have to Tell Stories Like Grandpa in The Princess Bride

Talk about the birds you see in your backyard, what breakfast cereal sounds like when you pour milk on it, or the 5k you're running this weekend. If it's worth telling your closest friends and your closest "How do I know you again?" acquaintances on Facebook it could be worth a mention in a letter. Well...maybe not. 😊

Imagine The Smile.

For most of the children in our sponsorship program, getting a letter is a cause for celebration. Hey, it's actually true for our own kids. When you keep the smile in mind, you realize it doesn't really matter what's inside the magical envelope.

It's Not Her. It's You.

Letters from your sponsored child may be short, infrequent or seemingly insincere — there are several explanations for why this can happen — but it's your expectations that set the stage.

Your experience and comfort with letter writing is not the same as your child's. There are language, age and cultural differences in play. Rise above them, and rely on what we've said. You might not always see how God is working through your letters, or realize that He's working on you, but keep writing anyway.

POWER OF WORDS

The words you write to your sponsored child are, quite simply, life-changing and powerful.

Words have power. They can destroy and create. Sometimes a single word can change everything.

Do you remember the words and kind acts that encouraged you when you were young? Who was the adult that spoke into your life? Hopefully, he or she spoke words of love and acceptance that encouraged you.

Our words quickly take root in the fertile soil of a child's spirit. The power of words is that a life can be launched with as little as a single phrase, an uplifting word or an act of kindness. Think of the power we wield and the impact we can make if we become more intentional about encouraging our sponsored children.

It cannot be overstated. The children in our programs are telling us this. What you say in your letters matters!

Our words are often the very things that help create future dreams. And sometimes those dreams are to be just like us.

It doesn't take much to make an imprint in the spirit of a child. In your next letter, consider the power of your words and choose to make a mark that will last a lifetime. Build your sponsored child up in Jesus' name.

The relationship you build with your sponsored child through letter writing is crucial in helping meet your child's needs.

A study we carried out in Peru, Rwanda, Guatemala and Thailand reported that:

- More than 90 percent of children strongly experience joy, love, encouragement and a sense of belonging when they receive letters from their sponsors.
- Many children who receive letters are more likely to pray and are more self-motivated to improve their circumstances.
- Children who receive letters feel more motivated at school and church activities, and they consistently demonstrate greater confidence, including behaviors such as an ability to care, awareness of generosity and sharing, ability to communicate, obedience and helpfulness.
- Virtually all children who receive sponsor letters keep them forever, regularly reading and rereading them, particularly when they are discouraged.

Over and over, graduates from our Child Sponsorship Program point to your letters and prayers as the two things above all others that gave them hope, courage, and the belief that they could overcome their circumstances.

Your letters can inspire your sponsored child to study harder at school, to be more confident in his relationships, and to draw closer to God. But sometimes it's difficult to know what to write when writing.

To help get you started, and writing regularly, we offer 80 letter-writing prompts on current events, food, your spiritual life, your childhood, and several other topics.

The prompts are questions for you to answer about yourself, but many of them can serve as letter-writing ideas and questions you can ask your sponsored child too.

You can also use this GREAT acronym to guide you.

- **G** — Greetings
- **R** — Remember something your sponsored child has said and build on it.
- **E** — Explain something about yourself or your world. This is where our letter-writing prompts come in.
- **A** — Ask your sponsored child a question. The letter-writing prompts work here too. Just turn them around.
- **T** — Toodle loo! Say your goodbyes. This is a great place to share a Bible verse and a word of encouragement.

Letter-Writing Prompts about Your Childhood

- What activities did you enjoy as a child?
- Who was your favorite teacher? What was the teacher like?
- Whom did you admire as you were growing up? Why?
- How did you get your name? What does it mean?
- Did you grow up in church? How did you come to know Jesus?
- What was a challenge you had to overcome as a child or teenager?
- What was your favorite part of school?
- What was your least favorite part of school?
- What happened during a typical school day?
- What was your first job like?

Letter-Writing Prompts about Your Life Today

- What is your typical day like now?
- What do you do at church/work/school?
- What do you like most about your hometown?
- What are some interesting facts about your state/province/region?
- How do you relax?
- What's your favorite holiday? How would you describe the sights, sounds, smells, tastes of that holiday?
- What's your biggest challenge at the moment?
- What other human understands you better than anyone else? How did you come to know this person?
- What are you learning right now?
- What's one of your favorite Bible stories or passages? Why?

Letter-Writing Prompts about Your Family

- What are your closest family members like?
- What happens when your extended family gets together?
- What do you believe is God's purpose for your family?
- What is your biggest challenge as a family?
- How has God been faithful to your family?
- What prayers has God answered in your family?
- Who else in your family knows Jesus? How did they come to know Him?
- What's your favorite thing about your family?
- In what way does your family work together best?
- What role has your family played in your faith journey?

Letter-Writing Prompts about Your Spiritual Life

- How has God recently answered your prayer?
- How have you sensed God's leading at different points of your life?
- Who is your spiritual role model?
- When have you needed to repent?
- How has God comforted you in trouble?
- Why do you love God?
- How did you become involved in your local church?
- What do you believe are some of God's purposes for your life?
- What was the latest sermon you heard or class study about? How has it impacted you?
- What is a challenge in your relationship with God?

Letter-Writing Prompts about Your Local Church

- How would you describe your pastor?
- What do you like about your local church?
- What role do you play in your local church?
- How do you use your gifts, skills and passions in your church?
- Who is your best friend at church and how did you become friends?
- Why is your local church important to you?
- How is your church active in the community and world?
- How does being a part of the church challenge you?
- How do you know God wants you to be part of this church?
- How did God lead you into ministry within your local church?

Letter-Writing Prompts about Your Sponsored Child

- What is your prayer for your sponsored child?
- How do you remember the child throughout the week or month?
- Why does this child matter to you?
- What have you recently learned about the child's country?

Letter-Writing Prompts about Your Sponsored Child_continued

- What do you hope the child will learn about God or spiritual life? (This could be a truth or skill.)
- What do you appreciate about this child? (Comment on recent letter, the child's prayers for you, artwork in a letter, smile in the photo, or something else.)
- What do you want your sponsored child to remember when facing discouragement?
- What concern of yours would you like your sponsored child to pray about?
- What do you think about the child's latest letter or picture you received?
- How has being a Compassion sponsor changed you?

Letter-Writing Prompts about Food

- How would you describe one of your favorite meals?
- How do you prepare one of your favorite meals?
- Who taught you to cook or who cooks for you now?
- What role does food play in holidays or celebrations?
- What's your favorite holiday food/special food?
- Does your family have any food-related traditions?
- How does your typical family/group meal proceed?
- Who is the best cook you know?
- Where did your family's favorite dishes originate? How did they become favorites?
- Have you ever eaten a dish from your child's country? What did you think?

Letter-Writing Prompts about Current Events

- What's something significant occurring in your town or region right now?
- How are you praying about a significant event in your child's country or region?
- What does the Bible say in relation to a current event that concerns you?
- How do you overcome anxiety when facing worrisome events?
- What goals have you set for yourself? How much progress have you made?
- What news has recently made you happy?
- How has a recent event impacted your faith?
- How does your life fit into a larger trend or situation in your area?
- What role has your church played in an area event?
- Why do you care about what's happening around you?

Compassion video: <https://vimeo.com/366552267>

Also visit the Compassion Blog for more ideas: <https://blog.compassion.com>