



Writing to Your Sponsored Child

As part of your sponsorship, you will be asked to write a letter to your sponsored child(ren) at least once a year. For many of us, this is the only interaction we will have with our sponsored child, so it provides an important message that you care for him or her. From a study done by Compassion, 90% of children receiving letters from their sponsors strongly experience joy, love, encouragement, and a sense of belonging.

We know that letter writing can be a challenge, particularly in knowing what to write so here are some tips of what you might include:

- Pray for your child before you write and tell them you prayed for them in the letter. Share a Bible verse if you can.
- Ask questions. Even if the child doesn't answer, they will know you are interested in them.
- Share your life in one of the following ways, being sensitive that you are writing to a child in poverty:
 - Speak about your life as a child – describe your activities, your school life, your first job or a favorite funny memory.
 - Speak about your life today – describe your family and/or pets (include pictures), what you do at church/work/school, what you like about where you live, a challenge you face, or share what you are learning right now.
 - Speak about your spiritual life – describe your relationship with Jesus Christ, one of your favorite Bible stories or passages and why, tell how God has recently answered your prayer, how God has comforted you in trouble, what you believe are some of God's purposes for your life, how you are involved in your local church or share a recent sermon or study that impacted you.
 - Speak about food and customs for your favorite holidays (avoid speaking of gifts).
- Comment on the information in the last letter you received from your sponsored child, whether it is a picture they drew or something about their life they shared. Share something you learned about their country if applicable.

Your letters do not have to be long, and they can be written on a greeting card or stationery. Know they will be taken home and treasured, particularly if a picture is included. Unfortunately, we do not accept packages or gifts for sponsored children. In part because it would have to go through customs and, also, it would create differences in the treatment of sponsored children. However, flat paper items like bookmarks or stickers may be included.

Know that letter writing is not part of the Ethiopian culture and letters typically are written as part of a class exercise and may seem a little impersonal or formal. Specific questions often aren't answered because students don't have their letters with them to refer to. But this doesn't mean they are any less valued!