



## Sponsor Letter Writing Guide

We all know words are powerful. As a sponsor, you have the opportunity to use your words to encourage the child you sponsor. One of the best aspects of sponsorship is the relationships built between sponsors and students. Through letters and pictures, you can get to know the child you sponsor and they you. It's a chance to create an encouraging friendship that crosses cultures and experiences. Here's how it works:

1. Type your letter and email it to [sponsorship@estherschool.org](mailto:sponsorship@estherschool.org)
  - a. Note: Your letter doesn't have to be long. In fact, we ask that you keep it to one page so we can print.
2. Be sure to attach a picture to the email. We can print both the letter and picture right on campus. Students love to put a face to their sponsor!
3. Once a month, we gather the letters/pictures, pass it to the student, and read it with them right then and there.
  - a. You can write up to once a month if desired, but a good rule of thumb is one to two times a semester.
4. Students will respond appropriately for their age. As they learn to read and write, their responses to your letters will increase.

Now that we've explained how the process works, let's talk about the letters themselves. Sometimes it hard to know where to start or what to include. Here are some helpful tips when forming your letter:

- Introduce yourself and your family. Students want to get to know you!
- Talk about where you come from and the area you in which you live.
- Share some of your "favorites":
  - Hobbies and pastimes
  - Things to do outside
  - Subject in school
  - Food to eat or make
- Share encouraging Bible verses
- Let them know you are praying for them. You can even share specifically what you are praying for as you write your letter. They are praying for you, too.
- Share a passage from a children's devotional.
- Ask them questions. Listening is an important part of communication. Here's some questions:
  - What's your favorite subject at school?
  - How old are you?

- Do you have any siblings?
- What do you like to play at recess?
- What do you like to do after school?
- Do a quick Google search on Zambia and ask them about a holiday or food you found.

As you write, think about what the child you sponsor might be familiar with. For example, Zambia does not get snow. If you want to write about going skiing, explain to them what that looks like and send a picture.

There are some topics we ask you to avoid in your letters. There may be things that are appropriate in your context but could lead to uncomfortable situations or unmet expectations.

**Here are some DO NOTS:**

- Include your address or phone number.
- Say you would like to come and visit (unless you really are coming and your plane tickets bought). To a child at The Esther School, they will think that means you are actually coming and very soon.
- Say you want to take them home with you or that they should come and visit you.
- Talk about money you have raised for them.
- Talk in depth about your material possessions (ex: how big your house is, what car you drive). This only highlights differences between you and your student.
- Send gifts. Even though it's well meant, we've found this hurts rather than helps.

To be honest, it's not so much the size of the letter or the specific words inside. It's the act of letting a child know you are thinking of them and praying for them. We don't want you to feel guilty for not writing or overwhelmed by what to put inside. Instead, we want to encourage you in making that connection with the child you sponsor, because we know the bright smiles and happy dances that come when a student receives a letter. Why the excitement? Because relationships are important.

The bottom line is this: as a sponsor, the access to education you give a child makes a lasting impact on their lives. Your words can, too.

Have questions or need help drafting a letter? Email [sponsorship@estherschool.org](mailto:sponsorship@estherschool.org) - we'd love to help!