



Because of you, Rosemary, I am not poor anymore.

I was orphaned, rejected, and miserable, but you saw a great woman. I didn't know the power of Christ but I decided to accept Jesus because of you.

In the times of my crying, you were where I wandered from place to place looking for your heart so that even in a far away corner, you expressed how much love you had for me.

I was the child who never expressed how much love you had for me.

Even when He told me to go, you remembered.

Each year, you celebrated my birthday and remembered.

round me ever

## Making every word count

**How you can change a life  
with 10 minutes a day,  
three times a year.**

The letters you wrote to me are my greatest inspiration.

You released me just because one day you picked my photo from the Compassion desk and decided to sponsor me.

Thank you my Mum for letting me be your child.

This is what God has made of me through what you did. I am responsible and fulfilled, and I am extending the love that you gave me to the many children who suffer in poverty.

I'm sad that I can't hug you but I hug you in my heart.

Because you gave, I am what I am today. Thank you so much Rosemary, for love.







# A Big Thanks

**Thank you so much for choosing to change the world for a child through sponsorship. Together, we are impacting not only this generation, but those that will follow, with the love and inspiration of one-to-one connections that span borders, boundaries and circumstances.**

The special relationship which can be built through letters, gifts and prayers for each sponsored child is more important than you might think. It tells them they are loved, valued and unique. It shows a child a glimpse of the great love God has for them. And that knowledge has the power to transform their life.

The letters you share between sponsor and sponsored child are the cornerstone to building your

relationship. Do others in your church, family or social network also sponsor children? Imagine the impact you could all have simply by fostering meaningful relationships with the children already connected to sponsors here in your world through sponsorship!

This booklet has everything you need to know that you can share as you host letter writing events of all shapes and sizes. It is our hope that it will help you and others make the most of the opportunity to transform the life of a sponsored child through letter writing.

**Happy writing!**

A REAL  
DIFFERENCE



**Poverty is so much more than a lack of food or clothing. It is also a lack of hope, confidence and opportunity to strive for a better future.**

That's why Compassion takes a holistic approach to child development. Our programs work to address not only a child's physical needs, but their spiritual, economic, social and emotional needs as well. The personal relationship you build with your sponsored child through letters is crucial in helping to meet these needs.

A relationship is a two-way street. The letters you receive from your sponsored child can open your eyes to life in different parts of the world, inspire you and

broaden your understanding of what it means to be part of the Kingdom of God.

But the effect on your sponsored child can be even more profound. The emotional, social and spiritual boost that your encouragement gives your sponsored child can be pivotal to their development. It can inspire them to study harder at school, to be more confident in their relationships and to draw closer to God. Over and over, graduates from Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program point to their sponsors' letters and prayers as two things that gave them hope, courage and the belief that they could overcome their circumstances.





**A recent study Compassion carried out in Peru, Rwanda, Guatemala, East India and Thailand found that:**

- ♥ Over 90 per cent of children report strongly experiencing joy, love, encouragement and a sense of belonging when they receive letters from their sponsors.
- ♥ Many children who receive letters report that they are more likely to pray and are more self-motivated to improve their circumstances.
- ♥ Children who receive letters report feeling more motivated at school and church activities.
- ♥ Children who receive letters consistently demonstrate greater confidence, including behaviours like an ability to care, awareness of generosity and sharing, ability to communicate, obedience and helpfulness.
- ♥ Virtually all children who receive letters keep them forever, regularly reading them and rereading them, particularly when they are discouraged.
- ♥ Over 80 per cent of Compassion-sponsored children globally receive letters from their sponsor—thank you!

“ I like to receive gifts, but I love to get my sponsor's letter more. I love it especially when there are photos of my sponsor. My sponsor Miss Johnson loves me and sends me a nice photo of her. She wrote that she prays for me. ”

*Seven-year-old Tithi from Bangladesh*







**The most significant impact of letters on a child living in poverty isn't in the classroom, in their home or even in their interactions... it's in their heart.**

More than a decade after graduating from the Child Sponsorship Program, Lillian is an active and influential member of her community working to bring change in Kampala, Uganda. She wrote this letter to her Australian sponsor, Rosemary.

**Want to know more?**  
Check out the video  
'Lillian's Story' on the  
DVD included in this kit.





Because of you, Rosemary, I am not poor anymore.

I was orphaned, rejected, and miserable, but you saw a great woman.  
I didn't know the power of Christ but I decided to accept Jesus  
because of you.

In the times of my crying, weeping, sickness and loss, where I  
wandered from place to place looking for comfort and love, you  
extended your heart so that even in a far away country, I felt that I  
belonged to your family...

I was the child no one remembered, but you wrote to me and expressed  
how much love you had for me and I gained the courage to face life.

You are the special mother God brought to my life through His ministry of  
Compassion. Even when He took my natural mother I felt I had a mum!

Each year, you celebrated my birthday, even though no one around me ever  
remembered. The letters you wrote to me are my greatest inspiration.

You released me just because one day you picked my photo from the  
Compassion desk and decided to sponsor me.

Thank you my Mum for letting me be your child.

This is what God has made of me, through what you did. I am responsible  
and fulfilled, and I am extending the love that you gave me to the  
many children who suffer in poverty.

I'm sad that I can't hug you but I hug you in my heart.

Because you gave, I am what I am today. Thank you so much, Rosemary,  
for loving me the way you did.

I will always love and treasure you.

Your child and daughter, Lily.



LOVE










**Now you know just how important writing to your sponsored child is—but with a multitude of everyday things to do, you're not alone if it's been a while since you last wrote to your sponsored child!**

But where do you start? It can be hard to know what to say to someone who lives half way around the world and whom you've never had the chance to meet.

Introducing the **GREAT** sample letter, which is included in this kit. On the back of the **GREAT** sample letter card are some inspirational questions that will get you writing in no time!

- 
- G** Greetings!
  - R** Remember something your sponsored child has said and build on it
  - E** Explain something about yourself or your world
  - A** Ask your sponsored child a question
  - T** Ta ta! Say your goodbyes





# Frequently <sup>asked</sup> Questions



## **Why do I need to write letters when I already give money?**

Child sponsorship is more than a financial transaction. Your letters are foundational to your relationship with your sponsored child. Relationships are incredibly important to a child's development, but are often something children living in poverty lack. The emotional, social and spiritual boost that your encouragement gives your sponsored child can be pivotal to their development.

## **How do I send letters?**

Each time you receive a letter from your sponsored child, you will also receive barcoded Compassion stationery for you to write your response letter and mail to Compassion. Alternatively, you can use your own stationery

and simply write your child and supporter numbers at the top of every page. If you prefer to write your letters online through MyAccount, visit [www.compassion.com.au/letterwriting](http://www.compassion.com.au/letterwriting)

## **How often should I write?**

You can write whenever you like! Writing in response to each letter you receive from your sponsored child will help your conversations to flow, and writing more regularly will mean you could receive up to 6 letters from your sponsored child per year.





### **How long does it take for my letters to be delivered?**

Sponsors' letters are mailed fortnightly from Compassion Australia's office to the Compassion office in the country where your sponsored child lives. Many children live in areas where there is limited postal service, and letters are hand-delivered by staff. Translation time and unreliable delivery are the main reasons for delays. Your letter could take two to three months to reach your sponsored child, but we are continually working on ways to improve delivery. You should receive at least two letters a year from your sponsored child, in addition to an update from their child development centre, and a new photograph and updated student profile every two years.

### **Why do all my sponsored child's letters sound the same?**

Our program staff endeavour to teach children how to express themselves in writing and will often use letter writing as an educational activity. Please be patient while your sponsored child learns how to write.

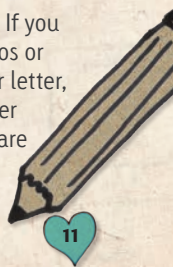
In addition, in many countries where Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program operates, letter writing is not a normal part of the local culture. Sometimes it is not common to discuss personal things like hopes and dreams, or even what daily life is like. Sometimes children write what they think their sponsor might want to hear. Your sponsored child may need your help to understand

that you are interested in their thoughts and opinions, and in the small details of their life. You can help your sponsored child to understand that you want to know him or her better by asking lots of questions in your letters, and telling your sponsored child about your own life. You may consider highlighting the questions you would really like answered.

### **Why do I need to include my supporter number and child number?**

Compassion Australia receives over 500 child letters from sponsors each day. All children's letters, both to and from the countries we work in, have to be recorded and tracked by our staff. The barcodes of your supporter number and child number that are included on the stationery you receive from Compassion help us to do this quickly and accurately.

However, you can also choose to use your own stationery—but please don't forget to include your supporter and child numbers. If a supporter forgets to write their supporter and child numbers correctly on a child letter, we must locate the numbers on the database and then hand write them on the letters being sent. This can take a considerable amount of time and resources, so we appreciate your help! If you are including stickers, photos or other paper items with your letter, please ensure your supporter number and child number are included on them as well.







### **What gifts can I send with my letter?**

Children love to receive gifts, but we're only able to send small, lightweight gifts made from paper or cardboard, such as postcards, stickers, bookmarks or photos that are the equivalent size of an A4 sheet of paper or smaller. If you are sending photos, please just ensure images are modest and would be considered appropriate in any cultural context.

Unfortunately, Compassion Australia is unable to send any non-paper items including ribbons, balloons, magnets, teddy bears, sports goods, dolls or anything made of fabric or metal. This ensures we keep our postage and administration costs as low as possible and avoids problems with theft and the customs process.

### **But I sponsor many children—how can I write to them all?**

Consider writing up a general letter template about what is happening in your life. When you write to each child, just change the individual child details and specific questions regarding each child's family, schooling, and so on.

### **Can someone write on my behalf?**

The joy of building a relationship through the exchange of letters is one of the greatest benefits of sponsorship, both for you and

your sponsored child. However, if you are unable to write to your sponsored child, we can find someone who can correspond on your behalf—simply contact Compassion to arrange this. Alternatively, you may wish to nominate a family member or a friend to write on your behalf. Unfortunately, you will no longer continue to receive the reply letters from your sponsored child, as they will be sent to the new correspondent so that they can continue the communication. However, you will continue to receive your updated student profiles every two years.

### **How can I keep track of the things my sponsored child tells me?**

It can be difficult to remember all the details from your sponsored child's letters, so keeping a record of the information your sponsored child shares with you, such as their favourite sport, their brother's name and their age, can really help your conversations to flow. Being able to remember details about your sponsored child's life will make your letters much easier to write and will also help you to develop a relationship over time. Creating a simple 'All About My Sponsored Child' card is a great way to do this. To help you get started, check out the sample card included in this kit and print out as many blank cards as you need from the template found on the DVD.



## Spread the Word!



**Now you know everything you need to know about writing letters to your sponsored child... but do all the other sponsors in your world?**

Telling everyone how important letters are and inspiring them to start writing is one way you can make a huge impact in the lives of children.


We've put together a short presentation you can give to any group to make it easy for you to spread the word about letter writing—you can find these PowerPoint slides and a snazzy video explaining your letter's journey from you to your sponsored child on the DVD enclosed. Make this presentation unique by adding your own experiences and personal style—no need to follow the script!





# Now What?

OK, so now your friends are inspired to start writing to their sponsored children! But how do you capture the excitement and keep the momentum up throughout the year? Here are some ideas to keep everyone writing that you can make as simple or as exciting as you like.



“ I believe that letter writing is one of the most important aspects of a sponsorship—it's an opportunity to speak love, hope and encouragement into these young hearts. Letters not only bless the child but their family as well. In our busy lives it can be hard to make time to write, which is why I run letter writing nights as an opportunity for sponsors to get together to share ideas and spend some time showing God's love to our precious children. ”

Stephanie Field, Harvest Australia Church, South Australia.



## GET CRAFTY

We all know kids love gifts—but how do you make paper presents fun? Get some crafty friends together and get creative. You could make some personalised bookmarks, design your own frames to send with some family snaps, or whip up some origami animals, boats or trinket boxes. You can find some templates on the DVD enclosed.



## GET CONNECTED

Compassion has its very own social networking site—OurCompassion at [www.ourcompassion.org](http://www.ourcompassion.org). OurCompassion is designed to help you connect with other like-minded Compassion supporters and Child Advocates, both locally and globally. Through OurCompassion, you can learn more about where your sponsored child lives, chat about our latest events and share your own sponsorship experiences,



## GET COOKING

Make the time to write by making it an event on your social calendar! Host a letter writing night for some sponsoring friends—simply break out the paper, pens and chocolate and get writing those letters with some company. Or make the evening more exciting—set a sport or country theme, get in costume, and cook up some international cuisine to get everyone in the frame of mind for writing! You can find some tasty recipes from around the world on the DVD enclosed.

letters, photos and much more with people in the US, UK and around the world who sponsor children in the same country and even the same child development centre.

Sponsors in your church could join one of the groups on OurCompassion to meet fellow sponsors, or even create a group of your own to inspire other sponsors worldwide! Visit [www.ourcompassion.org](http://www.ourcompassion.org) to find out more.





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