



*“God, give me a humble heart,
Give me a modest heart,
Give me a heart like yours”*

*Pastor Daniel Alberto Trujillo
Iglesia Metodista Cristo Resucitado
(Methodist Church of the Risen Christ)*

Guidelines for Writing Your Student

Writing your student is one of the best ways to build your relationship with your student, build their self-esteem and encourage them in both their faith and academic journeys. The very act of writing your student a letter, postcard, or note – with or without photos -- tells your student:

“You matter.”

“God loves you.”

“I love you.”

“I am with you.”

Please consider your writing an act of love, because that is exactly what it is. Our letters, backed by our prayers, provide real witness to God’s love in this world to your student. God Bless You for the letters you write your student!

What to Write About

- **Your Family** -- share everything about your family that is age appropriate for your student. Include your family’s ages and where they are in life. The fact that your children attend college can help provide inspiration for your student to complete their education and think about ways they might attend post high school education. Where you can, tie your family stories to experiences your student may have, for example key interests in school, participation in youth group, sports and other interests, volunteering in church and community, etc.
- **Your Pictures** – send your students photos of your family and let your student know you are all praying over him/her. Include photos with an emphasis on the people, avoiding pictures that communicate material issues. For example, a family vacation photo on the beach might be fine (stick to head shots, avoid shots with skimpy bathing suits) but for a ski vacation photo, pick a photo that is a close-up on your family, and leave out the skis. Also, avoid sending material possession photos like your car or the family boat. Pictures of your pets are fine, but you will want to emphasize that your pet is a much loved member of your family since many Honduran families do not keep pets in the same way we do in America.

- **Your Church** – share your stories about Resurrection and what is going on at the church. What kind of service you attend, the music you love, favorite Bible passages, your small group, and your activities in church. Just so you know, the Cristo Resucitado Methodist Church (where the school is housed) has a very good praise band, dancers that perform often during key songs, and a very energetic worship style. Also, they have a VERY active youth program with movie nights, service events, large group worship and Bible study, and attendance each year at the all-Honduras youth retreat the Honduras church puts on. All of these are points you and your student share in common. Tell your student what you love about our church, and ask them what they like best about their church.
- **Your Love for Jesus** – share your faith journey and love for Jesus, your favorite stories about Jesus’s life, and the difference your faith has made in your life. The importance of following Jesus throughout growing up and going to school is a message all youth need to hear.
- **Your Community, State, and Country** – share your stories about where you live: Kansas/Missouri, and the U.S. Share what you love best about America and your home community.
- **Your Holidays and Traditions** -- share how you and your family celebrate the holidays, from our national holidays to our Christian holidays. Honduras has a very family-centered culture, so sharing family traditions are great points of mutual interest.
- **Your School or Work** -- share what you are doing in school and/or your work. What you like best about each and why. In particular, tie your work and/or church volunteer work to topics you enjoyed in school, thus connecting the dots between pursuing excellence in education and building a life that is centered on those interests.
- **Your Past Trips to Honduras if Appropriate** -- if you have served on a mission trip, share your stories. When you went, where you went, the service work you did, the people you met, and what you loved best about Honduras. Emphasize what you learned about Honduras and how you carry that with you on a daily basis here at home. Point out all points of similarities you noted during your trip(s).
- **Your Encouragement** – lastly, be sure to encourage your student! Encourage their school work, their youth group participation, their Sunday School classes, their service work in the church, and their faith journey. Tell your student how proud you are to have their profile, to know them, to love them, and thank God that He sent your student into your life!

Topics to Avoid:

First things first: your act of sponsorship is an amazing testimony to God’s love in this world. Please don’t ever feel guilty about your position in life – if you do, please talk about it with one of our mission and/or church staff. But please do keep in mind the following guidelines to avoid communicating something that might not lift up your student.

Here are topics to avoid writing about:

- **Money** – please avoid any discussion about money. Don't pledge any additional funds in your letters, and avoid discussing topics that might raise issues of money (for example, mentioning that your family just bought a new car).
- **Material Possessions** – please avoid discussing material items like your car, clothes, size of your home, etc. You might, for example, relate a story about a family hike in the mountains, but you wouldn't want to mention that you camped in your family motor home. When in doubt, focus on the shared experiences and memories you have, while avoiding references to the materials items that may have been involved.
- **Future Visits** – please avoid telling your student you look forward to visiting with them until you have specifically applied and paid for your next Honduras mission trip. It would be crushing for a student to think you were going to visit him/her, and then not have it happen. Should you sign up for a Honduras mission trip – and we hope you do – please check what you say in your letter in advance with your trip leader to ensure it aligns with your specific trip itinerary.
- **Inappropriate Photos** – please know that Hondurans are very modest. Avoid pictures with any skimpy clothes in them such as bathing suits, tank tops, tight fitting clothes, and shorts as a general rule. Avoid any pictures with tobacco and/or liquor in them. Also, avoid pictures of your home or possessions, again focusing instead on the experiences and memories you've created as a family in your home.

What You Can Send with Your Letters

Your sponsorship and encouraging letters and prayers are the best gifts that you can give your sponsored students! The Missions department **has a very strict guideline for sending any gifts for the following reasons:**

- 1-It can cause problems and frictions between the kids. For those who have been on a trip, remember the story about the Mickey Mouse watch from training?
- 2- It creates a disparity among the sponsors. Many kids never even get one letter from their sponsor, and some really good sponsors resent the appearance of looking like a dud because they don't send gifts.
- 3- Since the program has grown to over 100 sponsored students, we just don't have the capacity to take down gifts if all the sponsors sent them.
- 4- Potential customs issues.

With those reasons in mind, the Missions department has agreed to allow the following:

- Items must fit in a standard envelope (6" x 9" max. size) with a value of \$2 or less.
- Examples:
 - Stickers, Bookmarks, Pictures (no frames, albums or books), Postcards, Coloring page sheets, tattoos

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You may **NOT** include:

- Anything that does not fit in a standard envelope (6" x 9" max. size) or has more than a \$2 value.
- Examples:
 - Books, Stuffed animals, Toys, Candy, Jewelry, Notepads

Note: Trip participants only may personally bring 1 book (a calendar is considered a book) for their student to keep as their own. Any pictures personally brought may be in frames.

If you receive a gift from your student, accept it with grace as a token of their heartfelt appreciation for all that your sponsorship is doing for them. Please contact Cheryl McMorris at cheryl.mcmorris@hotmail.com for questions or clarity.

Write your letters in English and feel free to add the Google Translation in Spanish if you'd like. Either way, rest assured that your English letters will be translated before they are given to your student.

Letters are transported to and from Honduras with every mission team that goes down (Honduras does not have a government postal system), but only 2 trips a year are designated at priority writing trips.

Sending printed material:

- Campus drop points- For all campuses, address to Global Impact Missions, Attn: Honduras sponsor program.
 - For Rez Blue Springs, Downtown or West campuses, drop off at the connection point.
 - For Central campus, the new Mission Engagement Space has a bank of cabinets against the wall and our drop box is the very right-hand drawer under the metal mailbox.
- USPS- Mail any letters to Cheryl McMorris, 15734 W. 148th Terr., Olathe, KS 66062

Sending Digital material

Email your letter and up to two image files to cheryl.mcmorris@hotmail.com. Word documents or .pdfs containing photos within the body are preferred and may contain more than two photos, but please be respectful of resources and try to keep it to one page front and back. All wishes and attachments will be printed and enclosed in an envelope to be taken down with the next team and handed out to the students.

Due Dates

All letters are due at least a week prior to a trip departure. This gives the coordinator time to process and solicit surrogate letter writers for letter priority trips. Trip dates can be found at cor.org/Honduras.

Return Letters

You may receive letters from your student when our mission teams return. They will be translated and mailed to you via USPS.

Emailing Your Student

No personal emails should be sent to your student. Currently, we are only sending physical correspondence to the students with the teams. Any digital emails/pictures that are sent to Cheryl McMorris will be printed out before putting in an envelope to sent down with the next team.

Social Networking

For your safety, we have been advised by our Honduran partners to NOT friend the students, families or faculty on Facebook or any other social networking platform. Complete guidelines are provided at the end of this document

Any Questions?

If you have any questions on writing your student, please contact us at any time:

- Cheryl McMorris – Student Sponsor Program Coordinator. 913-221-4174.
cheryl.mcmorris@hotmail.com
- Sheree Reece – Resurrection Mission staff member 913-232-4127

Social Networking guidelines for all mission trip, sponsor and pen-pal participants

For your safety, the COR leadership team for Honduras (Sheree, Bill & Cheryl) has been advised by the Honduran leadership team that you should not communicate with the Honduran students, staff (because of high turnover), or families (they do not want them to ask for things from you) unless authorized by Pastor Hector or the sponsorship administrator Amanda. Doing so would expose your lives, homes, loved ones and friends to what could be potentially dangerous and at the very least uncomfortable in certain situations. Exposure to our Facebook/Instagram and other social networking pages and pictures is like dangling our lives in front of them and may cause them to want to live our lives and leave their country, which is the opposite of what our mission there is trying to do. Also, there have been known gang members in the past that attended the Juan Wesley school. Please be aware that it is possible for connections to be made through the younger, innocent kids, and that names and pictures of your friends can also be easily found. Consequently, you may want to restrict your friend list access as well (instructions below). The potential danger of these “friendships” goes without saying, so following the rules is for the good of everyone.

Please Do....

Communication with sponsored students IS encouraged on the “**Juan Wesley Becas Students & Resurrection Sponsors**” Facebook page. Communication with non-sponsored persons can be done through the “**Iglesia Metodista: Cristo Resucitado**” Facebook page. If you see something that is not right, if someone is asking a lot of information about your life, asking for money, or implying they want to visit you without invitation, please inform your leadership team.

As a side note (sort of), any information about the school or church should come from Principal Olga or Pastor Hector via the COR leadership team. Our mission teams and sponsor program are very important to the church and school and they do not want any misunderstandings or bad information being passed on.

Instructions for restricting Facebook friends

To restrict who can see your **Friends list**:

- Settings > Privacy > Who can see my stuff > Who can see your friends list > edit > click on drop down next to current setting > select “Only me”

To see what the public or a specific friend is able to see on your page: from your profile page (if you are on your newsfeed, you can click on your profile picture on the top blue ribbon on the page to get to your profile page).

- Within your profile banner, click the ... > view as... In the black ribbon above your profile banner, you can choose to see the page as a specific friend or as the public sees it.

To **block** someone from being able to contact you via messenger: A blocked person will no longer be able to contact you (ex: send you messages, call you) in Messenger or in Facebook chat, nor you them.

- Settings > blocking > Block messages-enter friends name > confirm in popup window.