



## Newsletter Tips and Tricks

### FORMAT

1. **Monthly newsletters should be one to two pages:** Provide the crucial information to give your supporters a snapshot of the month such as where you are (if it is permissible to say), what work you will be doing, how long you will be there, and the cost associated with it.
2. **Use a clean and simple format:** The layout and overall look should be appealing. Too many colors, fonts, and pictures can be overwhelming. Some good resources to make attractive newsletters are Canva or the East-West letter formats provided by the marketing team.
3. **Make your letter easy to navigate:** Have a clear way for your team to contact you and to donate.
4. **Use pictures:** Having one to four pictures is ideal. Use relevant picture captions that briefly explain the story and grab the attention of your readers. *Be mindful of the pictures you choose. If people and locations need to remain private, food and landscape photos can be good alternatives.*

### TIPS

1. **Make it personal:** The key is to write like you're catching up with a good friend. Keep your audience in mind; treat them as your partners. Try to think of any question they might have, and answer those questions in your letter.
2. **Be as specific as you can:** These people are your ministry partners. If it's safe to provide them with details, do so. In order for them to become ambassadors, they should know enough to be able to accurately share about your ministry.
3. **Track ideas throughout the month:** Use phone notes, pictures you take, or a journal to track major events or stories that happen during the month that you can include when it comes time to write your newsletter.
4. **Be consistent:** Consistency conveys a strong work ethic to your supporters. Commit to sending your newsletters consistently. One good way to stay on top of this is to send your letter on the same day every month.

### CONTENT

1. **Topics to include:** Some things to write about are ministry updates, family updates, the language and culture, funny stories about how you're adjusting and learning, prayer requests, follow up to old stories, and a thank you. Aim to keep your sections short by limiting your word count, using bullets, and employing subheads.
2. **Keep ministry stories front and center:** Stories speak louder and are easier to remember than facts, figures, and numbers. Think about what keeps you engaged when reading others' newsletters.

3. **It is OK to write about pain and struggles:** Do not dwell on the negative, but you can share authentically and seek prayer. Keep a thankful attitude overall and leave venting for only the closest of friends, not your whole support team.
4. **Follow up:** It is good to keep track of what you wrote in previous letters and follow up on stories that have continuing parts and prayer requests that have been answered.
5. **Always ask for prayer:** Monetary giving is great, but being covered in prayer is even more important. It helps your readers if you have a consistent location within your letters for prayer requests.
6. **Thank your team:** You could not do ministry without their support, so thank them for it and tell them why you are thankful every time.

## NEWSLETTER NO-GOS

1. **Avoid long, listing paragraphs:** Think about what catches and holds your attention and try to provide that for your readers. Do not write a novel—monthly updates should be a snapshot, anything too lengthy likely will not get read.
2. **Do not get bogged down in the details:** It is better to intentionally leave off some unnecessary details than for important information be missed. You want the ministry and God's work to be easy to decipher, not blocked out by extra words.
3. **Do not only ask for money:** A monetary ask may be included in your letter, but it should not be the main focus.
4. **It is not a Christmas card:** In the same way that you do not want to only ask for money, you do not want to only write about your family and not update your supporters on the work that God is doing. The key to a healthy letter is balance.
5. **Do not try and sell your ministry:** Remember that your supporters are already partnering with you, and more importantly they are partnering with God in His work through you. There is no need to try and sell or convince them of your ministry. Watch and let the Holy Spirit move in people's hearts.
6. **Do not preach at your supporters:** Your supporters want to hear how you are growing and learning in the Lord. You can share what God is teaching you, but preaching at people in newsletters may turn them away.

## AVOIDING THE SPAM FOLDER

1. **Whitelist:** Ask your supporters to take a couple of minutes to whitelist your emails so they will not go to Spam. *The steps for this differ based on which email provider each supporter uses; however, Google is a great tool to search for easy step by step guides on how to whitelist emails for each provider.*
2. **Litmus:** Purchase a subscription to Litmus in order to check your emails for spam risk before they are ever sent.
3. **Mail Tester and IsNotSpam.com:** These are free sites where you can have your email evaluated or spam risk before sending them.