



YOUR STORIES MATTER

A Step-by-step Guide to Writing Your Best Prayer Letter

You have an **amazing story** to tell
& we want to help you tell it well.

1. **Do a brain dump.**

Survey your content options by answering these questions:

1. What's been happening in your ministry?
2. What have you been learning?
3. What do your partners want to know?
4. What story has impacted you recently?

2. **Choose just ONE content option**
from your list to focus on in this letter.

3. **Choose your theme.**

To turn your content idea into a story, first ask yourself: why am I telling my partners this? What do I want them to learn from it?

Use the theme you've chosen to help shape your story.

4. **Make your story memorable.**

Use concrete details. Instead of relying on abstract concepts, describe sensory details. Set the scene. Bring characters to life.

Start your story with a hook. Say something surprising, descriptive or interesting. Leave behind generic greetings. Grab your reader from the start and make them curious.

Be vulnerable. Share your struggles honestly. Your partners want to relate to you and know how to pray for you.

5. **Clean it up.**

Keep it short. If you're writing monthly, limit yourself to 250 words and 2-3 photos. If you're writing quarterly, limit yourself to 350 words and 3-4 photos. (For printed communication, monthly letters can be one-page, quarterly can be two pages.)

Review your first paragraph. Did your hook get buried in vague reflections? Make sure your first sentences catch people's attention and support your main theme.

Make every word count. First drafts aren't meant to be perfect. Revisit your work a second or third time to omit extra words. If your letter makes sense without a word or sentence, toss it.

6. **Consider visual elements.**

Leave white space. Give your words and photos breathing room.

Photos. Use clear photos with an obvious focal point. Take advantage of editing tools to adjust light and crop out distractions. Include candid shots, not just posed pictures.

Include a video (if you send a digital version). Record snippets from daily life. Share prayer requests. Report updates on a story from a previous letter.

7. **A note about security concerns.**

Review your team's security guidelines.

The sensitivity of your work may require you to steer clear of identifying details. These are typically descriptions of a person or place that makes you or your ministry recognizable. That doesn't mean you need to omit description altogether. Tell stories with a singular theme in the body of your letter.

8. **Is one story enough?**

For the main body of your letter, yes. You may want to include brief prayer points or a short family update in a smaller section (see next page for a sample prayer letter layout). But, all other content can be saved for your next letter, a social media post or personal blog.

TRY TO AVOID:

Letting family news dominate every letter. Make sure ministry stories still take priority.

Writing a report. A story-driven letter will always be more memorable. Refrain from simply listing facts or events.

Need a little more guidance?

This resource was adapted from the booklet, "Writing Your Best Prayer Letter."

CONTACT us.comms.coordinator@omfmail.com for the full step-by-step guide.

THE
Smith Family
MINISTRY UPDATE



Taeng and his wife, Mali, at their café.

MAY 10, 2020

A Coffee Shop Surprise

"Host the English Club here!" Taeng said as he handed me a cup of black coffee—my favorite.

I quickly set down the steaming mug. *"Really?"* I said.

"Yes, of course! I will tell my daughter to go too. She's been wanting to learn English."

Tom and I have become good friends with Taeng's family. They own the most popular café in town. When Taeng's wife became sick 5 months ago, we asked if we could visit and pray for her. He politely agreed. Taeng knows we are followers of Jesus, but he has shown little interest in learning more. Like many Thai Buddhists, Taeng is content for people to follow as many gods as they choose.

I had just been telling Taeng about our idea for an English club to gauge interest among our local friends. I even told him we'd use the Bible as the English text. I'm not sure what I expected Taeng's response to be, but I certainly wasn't expecting him to offer his café as the meeting place! And yet, his response was an answer to prayer. We now have a public place to gather, which will give the club more visibility. On top of that, it turns out Taeng's daughter is in fact interested in coming.

Praise God for his provision! Pray for more interest in this club, and that the Lord will use it to draw our neighbors to himself. Pray specifically over Taeng and Mali's family, and that they would come to know God's love. Thank you for investing in God's work among the Thai people. You are a precious part of our lives and ministry. We're so grateful for you.

Love, Miranda, Tom, Maisy and Trevor

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Please pray for the 5-day kids' camp two months from now. Ask the Lord to move in the lives of the 100 children, both Buddhist and Christian, who will attend.

Ask God to expedite our visa renewal. Pray that we avoid the fines incurred by delayed processing.

Pray for Joe as he begins training this week for new aspects of his role. Ask God to help him grasp new systems quickly. And that relationships with Thai co-workers would remain strong.



People still talk about last year's kids' camp. We're hoping it's even more impactful this year!



We celebrated Trevor's second birthday this month! It was a small but fun get-together with our neighbors and friends from church.



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[SAMPLE PRAYER LETTER]