

Key Elements to the Format of a Good Letter

1. The letter should be attractive in the way a subject is “framed by the photographer to create an appealing picture. The letter should be easy on the eye. Tips:
 - a. Use a logo
 - b. One page is best
 - c. Lots of white space
 - d. Margins should not be justified.
 - e. Indent paragraphs and double-space between paragraphs. Don't make your paragraphs too long--five lines are a good length, but don't make any paragraph longer than seven lines.
 - f. Use a serif font such as *Georgia* or *Times Roman*. (A serif font is one that has small horizontal lines and flourishes on the tops and/or bottoms of the letters that help carry the eye along and make the task of reading easier.)
 - g. The use of bullets and numbered lists rather than long, informational paragraphs also help readers scan and comprehend information easier.

2. **Start with a personal hello.**

Write the letter as if you were sitting down and personally explaining the situation to a friend. In order to do that, you should use the prospect's name in the salutation. With computer-generated letters, it won't be difficult to insert the name of the addressee in every letter that goes out. If this is not feasible, at least use a term that suggests what relationship this person should have with your church.

3. **Write an interesting opening line.**

Get the readers involved immediately with a personal reason they should support the church.

4. **Emphasize the positive.**

Using "no," "not," and "never" can register in readers' minds and make them think a cause is hopeless. Turn your language around to show the positive influence money can have on a negative situation.

5. **Talk about the operation of the church in terms of ministry rather than budget.**

(note: see article on Faith Based Stewardship in the first section of this handout)

6. **Tell how the church is fulfilling its ministry.**

7. **Tell how the reader can help: by making a pledge.**

8. **Ask for the gift and enclose a pledge card.**

9. **Tell when/how the pledge should be returned.**

10. **Say Thank You and close with a blessing.**