



Harriet Beecher  
Stowe House

*writing the next chapter together™*

## The Beecher Family's Version of Video Chats



### How do you keep in touch with your family while you are apart?

Today, as we stay at home and social distance, how do you keep in contact with family members you can't see physically?

- Do you Facetime with Nana?
- Text Aunt Brenda every other day?
- Have you hosted a Zoom game night with your cousins?

Harriet Beecher Stowe lived in a different time. Technologies that are all too common today were not invented yet. Yet she easily stayed in contact with her siblings – a large, socially mindful family through the **Circular Letter**. By this means, the Beecher family could share news, talk about events in their daily lives, and generally remind each other of the important things in which they believed.

A new letter may start with Edward and his wife in Illinois. After receiving it in the mail (you know – the US postal service), Harriet and the Cincinnati crew read the letter. Then they added to it and sent it on to the next sibling. Each family member added news and comments before mailing it on to the next household. The final stop was Mary in Connecticut. She would add her piece and send it back West for everyone to read and write some more. Although not immediate, like today's Zoom session, it certainly shared the news with the whole family.

Give this “old-fashioned” communication a try. Write your letter and send it along with this explanation. See how many relatives and friends it goes to before returning to you. Freestyle your letter or use our template to get started.



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## Letter Writing Template

Using these prompts can help you get started writing your own family and friends **Circular Letter**. You can fill in the blanks or use a blank sheet of paper to answer these questions (or other questions that you come up with).

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

What is your typical daily routine right now?

What is something new you learned today?

What do you not like about being “stuck at home”?

What is something that you did today that was fun?

What is something you wish for?

Love, \_\_\_\_\_

*P.S. Write yours and send it on to another family member*