

Messiah Lutheran Church

Dignity Project



Join our Dignity Project

***Help us help them, by sewing
"Sani-panties"
distributed through
Little Dresses for Africa.***

In 2019, Messiah Lutheran church began our Dignity Project. We gather for a workshop, on the 2nd Saturday of each month, in the third grade Sunday School classroom on the lower level of the church. During the month we work at home to cut flannel and batting and to assemble the pads. The pads are sewn together and two pins are attached on top and bottom to complete the project. Not everyone needs to sew. You can choose your own amount of involvement and you can only work on one step of the project if you choose.

We invite you to join us to assemble sani-pads for Little Dresses For Africa Dignity Program. Stop in during any workshop day to check out how we are doing our part in providing the girls with dignity.

This is a very important social justice ministry. As you will read menstruation is the number one reason why girls drop out of school in Africa.

According to UNICEF, one in ten schoolgirls in Africa miss classes or drop out completely due to their period, and substitute pads or tampons for less safe and less absorbent materials such as rags, newspaper or bark.



There are many aspects that link girls' attendance rates to their menstrual cycles.

Firstly, the lack of affordable sanitary products and facilities for girls and women keeps them at a disadvantage in terms of education when they are young and prevents their mobility and productivity as women.

Secondly, the lack of clean and healthy sanitation such as toilets and running water means that girls often do not have anywhere to change or dispose of pads safely and in privacy at school.

Thirdly, the taboo nature of menstruation prevents girls and their communities from talking about and addressing the problem; raising awareness and education to eliminate the stigma of menstruation is a large part of the battle.

UNICEF reports that "in countries where menstrual hygiene is taboo, girls in puberty are typically absent for 20% of the school year". Most girls drop out at around 11 to 12-years-old, and miss school not simply because they fear being teased by their

classmates if they show stains from their period, but also because they are not educated about their periods, and their need for safe and clean facilities is not prioritized.

The idea that monthly bleeding is something shameful, polluting, or taboo may also encourage girls to avoid social contact during their period. Additionally, the cultural implications of menstruation as a stage in a woman's development may be used to take girls out of school – the idea being that if a girl is ready for motherhood, then she is ready for marriage.

Menstruation is a reason for dropping out that can be added to the potential threat of sexual harassment from male teachers as girls develop. In either case, the result is girls lagging behind with schoolwork and performing badly.

We have delivered these personal items to the women and young girls and they are received with joy! This is a simple and very necessary project. We'd love to have your help! We will be sending these as well as Girls 14 or 16, women's small or medium size panties to the girls in Africa as part of our health education.

Little Dresses for Africa has seen the need among the young girls and women and encouraged our sewers to take part in sewing and sending what we call *"sani-pani"* as part of our *Dignity Program*.

Improvements in sanitation can go a long way to combating the problem. The distribution of these washable pads along with the panties lead to very helpful discussions surrounding their use and general health. The resulting good hygiene enables the girls to manage their periods more easily.

- ◇ The project consists of a simple 9" x 4" rectangular pads of absorbent material.
- ◇ We will also be collecting store bought new Girls 14 or 16, women's small or medium size panties to distribute along with these coveted items.

Thank you for considering to join this Social Outreach Ministry in this life-changing project.

**If you have any questions or want
more information please contact**

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**Place your items in the bin
by the Collection Area
near the Community Room.**

**Messiah will ship them to
Little Dresses for Africa
throughout the year.**

For More Information Go To:

[http://www.littledressesforafrica.org/blog/sani-panti-sewing-
instructions/](http://www.littledressesforafrica.org/blog/sani-panti-sewing-instructions/)

Messiah

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