



Jesus Was Breastfed

Supporting & Encouraging Breastfeeding in African American Churches in Arkansas

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Introduction

The 2018 Surgeon General’s Call to Action to support breastfeeding reports, “one of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant and herself is to breastfeed. However, in the U.S., while 75% of mothers start out breastfeeding, only 13% of babies are exclusively breastfed at the end of six months. Additionally, rates are significantly lower for African-American infants.” Research further indicates that disdain for public breastfeeding, lack of familial and community support, and accommodations likewise contributes to diminished breastfeeding rates.

Objective

Educate African-American churches on the benefits of breastfeeding and the importance of supporting breastfeeding parishioners. Further, help churches create lactation accommodation rooms and nooks. Use promotional materials to promote breastfeeding as normal.

Methods

Churches identified a ‘lead’/‘leads’ to be trained on:

- What the bible says about breastfeeding
- Benefits of breastfeeding
- How to identify the ideal location for rooms/nooks
- How to communicate with parishioners



- African Methodist Episcopal (n=1)
- Baptist (n= 3)
- Church of Christ (n= 1)
- Missionary Baptist (n=2)
- Non Denominational (n= 1)
- United Methodist (n= 1)

Results

Nine (9) churches from six (6) different religious denominations completed the education. Based on space available, 8 rooms and 1 nook were installed.

Each participating church received posters and fans with positive images of breastfeeding along with a supporting scripture. In addition, each church received scripted, faith-based messaging and social media content to help promote the benefits of breastfeeding in the congregation and community.

Discussion

The onset of Covid-19 hampered efforts to complete the project in a timely fashion. The pandemic also interfered with the recruitment, enrollment, and completion efforts of some churches who would otherwise have completed the project.

Based on anecdotal comments from participating churches, the African-American community is ready to receive broad faith-based breastfeeding education that positively affects baby, mother, and the whole congregation.

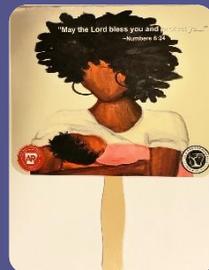
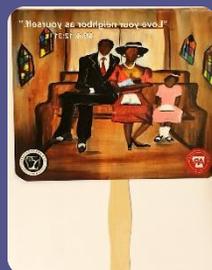
St. James United Methodist Church (Pine Bluff)

Before

After



Church Fans



Church Announcement



Social Media Content

