

## Guidelines for making Sundresses from Fabric

### Dress a Girl Around the World Basic Requirements:

You are about to create a once-in-a-lifetime dress for a young girl. Yes, it will be beautiful, but be aware that harsh conditions also require durability and that modesty is critically important.

- Use 100% cotton fabric, wash and iron before use.
- Use a stitch length of no more than 3.5 to sew straight, smooth and strong seams.
- Always backstitch 8 – 10 stitches to reinforce stitching at beginning and ending and where noted.
- All seams must be finished—no raw edges. Trim all loose threads.
- If you see your hand through the fabric when held up to the light, please use it only for pockets or trim.

### Step 1: Cut the Fabric

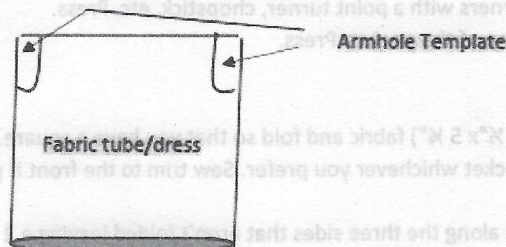
Use the chart for the size you wish to sew. Most fabric is 40-44" wide. *See Guidelines for Sundresses chart attached.*

### Step 2: Sew the Side Seam(s) (make a fabric tube):

- In most cases, you'll sew one ½" side or back seam. You can place the seam on the side or the back.
- Finish the seam with a French, overcast, or serged stitch.
- A French seam is ideal for fabric that ravel easily.
  1. To create French seam, match **wrong** sides, sew a ¼" seam, and trim.
  2. Press to one side.
  3. Turn fabric so that right sides are together. Press.
  4. Sew a 3/8" seam, enclosing the raw edges of the previous seam. Press seam to one side. Make sure you have enclosed the raw edges on the pretty (right) side of the fabric.

### Step 3: Cutting the Armholes

- Use the armhole template/pattern (*See Guidelines for Sundresses chart attached*) for the size dress you are making.
- With right sides out, lay the fabric tube in flat with the seam on the side or center back so that the top, bottom and sides are aligned.
- Pin the armhole template so the long, straight edge of the template is even with the side fold or seam of the fabric tube/dress and the top is even with the top of the dress.
- Cut around the template. If the side seam starts coming apart, re-stitch the seam.



#### Step 4: Creating the Casing

- At the top of the dress, between the armholes, fold the fabric over a measured  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to the wrong side, press.  
**Note:** It is important not to fold over more than a total of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " for the casing in order for the armholes to be the proper size.
- Unfold what was just pressed, fold over  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the top edge to the wrong side and press being sure not to press the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " fold line.
- Fold at the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " line again, stitch close to the second folded edge from the wrong side. Repeat for the back casing.
- For a more finished look, stitch along the top edge of the casing  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge.

#### Step 5: Hemming the Dress

- Turn up the amount necessary ( $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " ) for the dress to be the finished length of the size you are making. See **Guidelines for Sundresses chart attached**. Press.
- Unfold what was just pressed, fold over a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the top edge to the wrong side and press being sure not to press the  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " fold line.
- Fold at the first line again, carefully stitch close to the second folded edge from the wrong side or underside using bobbin thread that matches the fabric. Press.

#### Step 6: Pockets

Please attach 2 pockets on each dress that is an appropriate size for the dress with a minimum finished size of 5"x5" for dresses size 2 and larger. For the smaller dresses, please attach at least 1 pocket an appropriate size for the dress. You can make your own or use premade pockets. If you use premade pockets, not all are made well. If it's not, please take it apart and re-make it.

- If you are making your own pockets, there are two ways:
- Two-piece way:
  1. Cut 2 pieces of measured (minimum  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " ) fabric for each pocket. One will act as the facing. If you wish to add lace, ribbon, rickrack, etc. sew it to the front piece.
  2. Fold over the top of one pocket piece a measured  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", press. Do the same for the other piece.
  3. With right sides together, sew together the three sides that are not folded using  $\frac{1}{4}$ " allowance and backstitching at the beginning and the end.
  4. Clip corners and notch curved seams.
  5. Turn pocket right side out and push corners with a point turner, chopstick, etc. Press.
  6. Sew  $\frac{1}{4}$ " along the folded edges at the top of the pocket. Press.
- One-piece way:
  1. Use 1 piece of measured (minimum  $10\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " ) fabric and fold so that you have a square. The fold will be the bottom or top of the pocket whichever you prefer. Sew trim to the front if you wish.
  2. With right sides together, sew  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam along the three sides that aren't folded leaving a  $2 - 2\frac{1}{2}$ " opening. Be sure to backstitch when you begin and end sewing.
  3. Cut corners and notch curved seams.

4. Turn pocket right side out and push corners with a point turner, chopstick, etc. Press.

- To place the pocket on the dress, find the halfway point from the top of the casing to the hem. Position the top of the pocket at the halfway point or 1" below and about 2" from the side seam. Pin securely. For the smaller dresses, please place the pocket at the halfway point. Any lower and the pockets will be at the girl's knees.
- Before attaching, check to make sure the pocket is "straight" on the dress by measuring the distance from the top of the pocket to the side seam and the bottom of the pocket to the side seam; and measure the distance from the bottom left corner of the pocket to the hem and the bottom right corner of the pocket to the hem. **Note: This is important if you are attaching two pockets.**
- Attach the pocket by stitching close to the edge and **back stitching at both top corners.**

### Step 7: Inserting the Elastic in the Top Casing

- Cut the front and back lengths of elastic for the size dress you are making. **See Guidelines for Sundresses chart attached.** Non-roll elastic works best.
- Attach a safety pin to the front elastic and push it through the front casing. When its end reaches the end of the casing, backstitch casing and elastic together.
- Continue to push the elastic through the casing to the other end and backstitch the casing and elastic together.
- Repeat for the back casing.
- Check the entire length of each tie to be sure stitching has "caught" both sides.

### Step 8: Attaching the Dress Ties

- Cut two equal lengths of extra-wide double fold bias tape. **See Guidelines for Sundresses chart attached.**
- Fold each in half and mark the midpoint with a straight pin.
- Fold each end of the tie under  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and press.
- Starting from the midpoint, fold the bias tape over the raw edge of the armhole fabric so that the raw edge is encased by the bias tape and pin. Be sure the armhole edge is all the way in between the two layers of bias tape.
- Start sewing the edges together from one end of the tie, backstitching to start. Sew slowly and evenly, making sure that you "catch" the backside of the bias tape.
- Backstitch at the 4 points where the ties attach to the dress. Backstitch at the end of the ties.

### Step 9: Dress a Girl Label



Attach a *Dress a Girl Around the World* label to the dress under the pocket on the front right of the dress. Please sew all the way around the label and back stitch when you start and stop. You can purchase *Dress a Girl* labels at <http://www.dressagirlaroundtheworld.com/apps/webstore/>

If you wish to "garnish" you dress with buttons, bows, appliques, etc., make sure they are sewn on and NOT glued.

***You're done with your beautiful dress!***

## Guidelines for Sundresses

Dress Size	Cut Fabric		Finished Length	Armhole Pattern	Elastic Width	Elastic Length		Bias Tape Length
	Width	Length				Front	Back	
6 month	30-44"	17"	14"	Infant/A	3/8"	5 1/2"	6 1/2"	36"
12-18 m	30-44"	19"	16"	Infant/A	3/8"	5 1/2"	6 1/2"	36"
24 m	30-44"	21"	18"	Infant/A	3/8"	5 1/2"	6 1/2"	36"
3	32-44"	22"	19"	Small/B	1/2"	6"	7"	38"
4	34-44"	25"	22"	Small/B	1/2"	6"	7"	38"
5	36-44"	27"	24"	Small/B	1/2"	6"	7"	40"
6	40-44"	29"	26"	Medium/C	1/2"	7"	8"	40"
7	42-44"	31"	28"	Medium/C	1/2"	7"	8"	42"
8	42-44"	33"	30"	Medium/C	1/2"	7"	8"	42"
9	42-44"	35"	32"	Medium/C	1/2"	7"	8"	44"
10*	44-54"	37"	34"	Large/D	3/4"	9"	10"	44"

\* If the dress is less than 52" wide, make a hemmed slit (no longer than 3-4") for ease of movement.

**Trim all loose threads and leave no raw edges.**

**Backstitch 8-10 stitches when starting and stopping so the stitches don't come out with wear.**

**Side/back seams need to be French, overcast or serged stitched.**

**Attaching the ties:** When pinning the bias tape to the dress, be sure the ties are the same length.

Please check the back of the bias tape to be sure it is stitched along the entire length.

Back stitch at the ends of the ties.

**Pockets:** Please attach two pockets with a minimum finished size of 5" x 5".

Place the pockets 1-2" above halfway point of the length of the dress.

Use 2 pieces of fabric for each pocket for durability.

Backstitch at both top corners.

**DAG Label:** Please stitch a Dress A Girl label on the right front below the pocket.

Backstitch 8-10 stitches to start and end or sew twice around the label.