

## DAG Sundress Guidelines General Information



### Please read first!

Below are our group's guidelines for sewing sundresses. These are different than the Dress a Girl Around the World (DAG) website so please use these guidelines. I realize some of our guidelines and the information below are detailed; however, we are wanting to make God's best dresses for these little girls who may only have one new dress in her lifetime.

In general the smaller sizes are more popular than the larger sizes due to the dresses going to areas where the nutrition is not very good and girls tend to be smaller. Right now we only need sizes ½ to 6 (including size 6). You can also use regular patterns as long as they don't have functional buttons or zippers. For example, Simplicity 2377, 1449, 2241, 1119, 8101, 8347, 8145, and McCall's 6022 and 6017. When you use a regular pattern and before you cut the dress out, please add length to the dress so that the finished length on the Sundress Guidelines matches the Finished Length for the size you are making. Please attach two pockets to every dress. You would not believe how much the little girls love the pockets, and they need two, one for each hand! The larger the pockets the better since in many cases this is the only way the girls carry their treasures. When making sundresses, please be sure the bias tape used for the straps are at least 36" long for each strap on the smaller dresses. Most straps will be much longer (40"+) as you will see on the last page of the guidelines.

As for the fabric, please use a good quality 100% cotton or cotton/polyester with it being mostly cotton. Be sure the fabric is not see thru, but please don't use upholstery fabric for the dresses. If you can see your hand thru the fabric when holding it up, please use it as pockets or make bias tape out of it. We don't make dresses out of pillowcases anymore due to the fabric being so thin or not of good quality.

Generally we don't use fabric with faces, people or animals (including butterflies or bees) printed on it since some people won't wear the dresses because they think the spirit of the animal/person lives in the dress. Also, don't use holiday fabric, or fabric with Disney or other characters, writing, camouflage, American symbols, or other fabric specific to America, or shiny or black or black background fabric. If you already have fabric with animals or faces on it, please, go ahead and use it; however, please don't buy fabric with faces or animals to use for the dresses. I will send any dresses made with faces or animals to Central America since I can't send them to Africa.

Be sure to wash and iron the fabric before using it, but you don't have to wash the dresses after making them unless they're dirty or have pet hair on them.

You can purchase *Dress a Girl* labels at <http://www.dressagirlaroundtheworld.com/apps/webstore/>

Things to remember:

- ♥ Two large pockets on every dress (pockets can be inseam pockets) except 6 months (1/2 size) dress
- ♥ Finished length of the dress needs to be appropriate for the size based on the Sundress Guidelines
- ♥ If you making a sundress, please be sure the straps are the correct length for the size you are making. *See the Bias Tape Length on the last page of the Sundress Guidelines.*
- ♥ Backstitching when starting and ending is **very** important.

# Sundress Guidelines

## 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. If you have a machine that back stitches automatically, be sure it's 8-10 stitches or turn that feature off and back stitch it manually.
- All seams must be finished—no raw edges. Trim all loose threads.
- If you see your hand through the fabric when held up, please use it only for pockets or trim.



## Step 1: Cut the Fabric

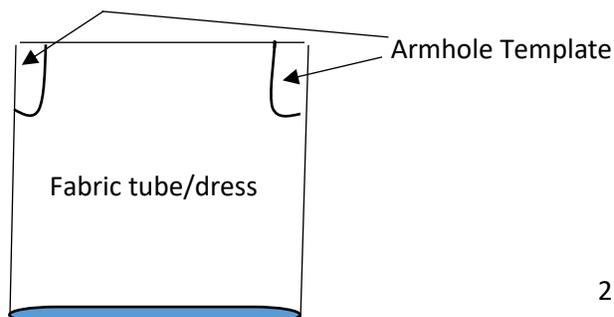
Use the Guidelines for Sundress chart attached for the size you wish to sew. Most fabric is 40-44" wide.

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

- In most cases, you'll sew one ½" 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 ravels easily.
  1. To create French seam, match **wrong** sides, sew a ¼" seam, and trim. Press seam to one side.
  2. Turn fabric so that right sides are together. Press.
  3. 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 (See Guidelines for Sundress chart attached) for the dress size you are making.
- With right sides out, lay the fabric tube 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 ½" to the wrong side, press. **Note:** *It is important not to fold over more than a total of 1 ½" for the casing in order for the armholes to be the proper size.*
- Unfold what was just pressed, fold over ¼" from the top edge to the wrong side and press being sure not to press the 1 ½" fold line.
- Fold at the 1 ½" 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 ¼" from the edge.

## Step 5: Hemming the Dress

- Please **measure** the dress to know how much hem to turn up based on the Guidelines for Sundress chart. Turn up the amount necessary (½ - 1 ½") for the dress to be the finished length of the size you are making. **See Guidelines for Sundress chart attached.** Press.
- Unfold what was just pressed, fold over a ¼" from the edge to the wrong side and press being sure not to press the ½ - 1 ½" fold line.
- Be sure your bobbin thread matches the dress. Fold at the first line again, carefully topstitch close to the second folded edge on the wrong side or underside using bobbin thread that matches the fabric. Press.

## Step 6: Pockets

**Please attach 2 pockets to each dress.** Pockets are very important since the girls who receive these dresses don't carry purses; the pockets are their only way to carry their treasures. Attach two pockets with a minimum finished size of 5"x5" for dresses size 2 and larger. The larger the pockets the better. For the smaller dresses, please attach at least 1 pocket large enough for a small doll to fit. 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.

There are two ways to make pockets:

- Two piece way:
  1. Cut 2 pieces of measured (minimum 5 ½" x 5 ½") 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 ¼", press. Do the same for the other piece.
  3. With right sides together, sew together the three sides that are not folded using ¼" 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 ¼" along the folded edges at the top of the pocket. Press.
- One piece way:
  1. Use 1 piece of measured (minimum 10 ½" x 5 ½") 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 ¼" seam along the three sides that aren't folded leaving a 2 - 2 ½" 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.

## Placing Pockets

- To place the pocket on the dress, fold the dress in half from top to bottom to find the halfway point from the top of the casing to the hem. Position the top of the pocket at the halfway point and about 2" from the side seam or sides. Pin securely. Please NOTE: 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 pockets are even on the dress by measuring the distance from the top of the pocket to the side seam or side of each pocket and measure the distance from the bottom of the pocket to the hem on both pockets.
- Attach the pocket by stitching close to the edge and **back stitching at both top corners**. These pockets will get a lot of use so please be sure the top corners of the pockets are secure with backstitching 8-10 stitches. If you have a machine that back stitches automatically, be sure it's 8-10 stitches or turn that feature off and back stitch it manually.

## 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 chart attached.*
- 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 pull the elastic through the casing to the other end and backstitch the casing and elastic together.
- Repeat for the back casing. Tug on the sides of the dress where the elastic is attached to be sure the elastic is secure.

## Step 8: Attaching the Dress Ties

- Cut two equal lengths of extra-wide double fold bias tape. Ties need to be really long to double tie a bow so little fingers can't untie them when playing. *See chart attached.*
- Fold each end of the ties under ¼" and press.
- Fold each in half and mark the midpoint with a straight pin.
- Starting from the midpoint, fold the bias tape over the raw edge of the fabric at the armholes so the raw edge of the dress 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 at the casings. Backstitch at the end of the ties.
- Check the entire length of each tie to be sure stitching has "caught" both sides.

## Step 9: Dress a Girl Label



Attach a Dress a Girl Around the World label to the dress about 1" 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 or sew around the label twice. You can purchase Dress a Girl labels at <https://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.

**PLEASE** double check the entire dress, inside and out, for any loose threads and trim, esp. the pockets.

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

## Guidelines for Sundress

Dress Size	Cut Fabric		Finished Length	Armhole Pattern	Elastic Width	Elastic Length		(cut 2) 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"
11*	44-54"	39"	36"	Large/D	3/4"	9"	10"	46"
12*	44-54"	40"	38"	Large/D	3/4"	9"	10"	46"

\* 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 8-10 stitches at the ends of the ties.

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

Place the top of the pockets at the halfway point of the length of the dress.

Use 2 pieces of fabric for each pocket for durability.

Backstitch 8-10 stitches at both top corners of each pocket.

**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.**