

Nancy's Notions®

sewing inspiration • education • tools & more
800.833.0690 nancysnotions.com

Little Dresses for Africa

Follow the simple directions below to make a dress that will be a prized possession for a grateful little girl in Africa. Use fabric yardage, or modify a purchased or gently used pillowcase. Mail completed dresses to Little Dresses for Africa, c/o Nancy's Notions®, 333 Beichl Ave., Beaver Dam WI 53916-0683, and we'll ship the dresses to their destination. For additional information, go to littledressesforafrica.org/blog/.

Dress with Elasticized Top

Materials required:

- $\frac{5}{8}$ yd.–1 $\frac{1}{8}$ yd. cotton fabric, depending on size
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. double fold bias tape
- 12"–16" elastic, $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, depending on size
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

1. Cut a fabric rectangle.

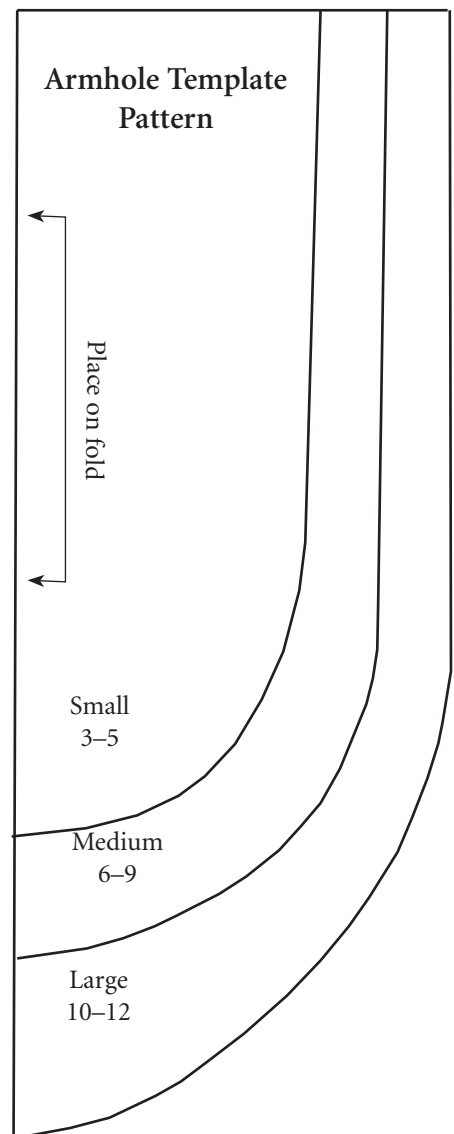
Size	Cut size	Finished length	Size	Cut size	Finished length
3	22" x 42"	19"	8	33" x 42"	30"
4	25" x 42"	22"	9	35" x 42"	32"
5	27" x 42"	24"	10	37" x 42"	34"
6	29" x 42"	26"	11	39" x 42"	36"
7	31" x 42"	28"	12	41" x 42"	38"

2. Fold fabric in half, meeting selvage edges. Stitch or serge the seam. Press seam open or to one side. Center seam on the stitched tube. (This will be the center back of the dress.)
3. Cut out armholes on upper side edges using the Armhole Template Pattern at right.
4. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{1}{2}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
5. Cut elastic into two equal lengths (6" for size small, 7" for size medium, and 8" for size large). Insert one length into each casing. Thread elastic through the casing; stitch elastic ends to the outer edges of the casing to prevent them from pulling out. This gathers the front and back edges.
6. Cut two 38" lengths of double fold bias tape. Open tape and turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each end to finish the ends of the tape. Refold tape and encase armhole, allowing equal tape extensions at each end of the armhole so the dress can be tied at the shoulders. Edgestitch tape.
7. Hem the lower edge by turning under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then 2". Edgestitch.

You're finished! Wasn't that easy?

Optional trim ideas:

- Add one or two pockets.
- Add a band of a contrasting or coordinating fabric to the dress.
- Add lace or other trims.
- Add an appliqué.
- Add machine embroidery.
- Use your imagination! This is a great way to use bits and pieces of leftover trims and fabrics.



Dress with Bias Tape Ties

Materials required:

- $\frac{5}{8}$ yd.–1 $\frac{1}{8}$ yd. cotton fabric, depending on size
- 3 yd. double fold bias tape
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

1. Cut a fabric rectangle.

Size	Cut size	Finished length	Size	Cut size	Finished length
3	22" x 42"	19"	8	33" x 42"	30"
4	25" x 42"	22"	9	35" x 42"	32"
5	27" x 42"	24"	10	37" x 42"	34"
6	29" x 42"	26"	11	39" x 42"	36"
7	31" x 42"	28"	12	41" x 42"	38"

2. Fold fabric in half, meeting selvage edges. Stitch or serge the seam. Press seam open or to one side. Center seam on the stitched tube. (This will be the center back of the dress.)
3. Cut out armholes on upper side edges using the Armhole Template Pattern on p. 1.
4. Cut two lengths of bias tape long enough to bind the armholes. Bind cut edges of armhole and edgestitch tape.
5. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{3}{4}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
6. Cut remaining bias tape into two equal pieces. Stitch folds and cut ends of tape together with a narrow zigzag to prevent stitches from breaking. Insert one piece through each of the casings, allowing equal extensions at each end. Machine stitch at center front and center back to prevent tape from pulling out of the casing.
7. Hem the lower edge, turning under $\frac{1}{4}$ " and then 2". Edgestitch hem.

To wear the dress, pull up tape ties to gather the top of the dress to fit. Tie bias tape at the shoulders.

Optional: Trim dress as desired. Several possibilities are listed on p. 1.

Modifying a Pillowcase to Make the Dress

Materials required:

- One new or gently used cotton pillowcase
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. double fold bias tape
- 12"–16" elastic, $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, depending on size
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

1. Trim off the seamed end of the pillowcase. Do not cut off the hemmed edge; it will be the hem of the dress.
2. Cut out armholes on the cut edge, using the Armhole Template Pattern as a guide.
3. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{1}{2}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
4. Cut elastic into two equal lengths (6" for size small, 7" for size medium, and 8" for size large). Insert one length into each casing. Thread elastic through the casing; stitch elastic ends to the outer edges of the casing to prevent them from pulling out. This gathers the front and back edges.
5. Cut two 38" lengths of double fold bias tape. Open tape and turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each end to finish the ends of the tape. Refold tape and encase armhole, allowing equal tape extensions at each end of the armhole so the dress can be tied at the shoulders. Edgestitch tape.

Optional: Trim dress as desired. Several possibilities are listed on p. 1.