



# Ms. Lillian's Dress Pattern

Designed by Geraldine Lowrey,  
Written instructions by Nancy Zieman

## SUPPLIES (for one dress)

These supplies will make one size 6 dress, the size most often requested.

- 1¼ yd. 40" cotton fabric OR (contrasting fabric as shown) use ⅝ yd. cotton fabric for dress body and ⅝ yd. cotton fabric for sleeves and ruffle
- 1 pkg. ½" ready made single fold coordinating bias tape
- 17" of ¼" elastic
- Coordinating all-purpose thread
- Optional: Fuse 'n Gather tape

Ms. Lillian's dress is named for our sewing celebrity, Lillian Weber, who set a personal goal to sew 1000 dresses by her 100th birthday. She not only reached her goal but surpassed it to make 1,234 dresses before passing away on the eve of her 101st birthday. Her legacy continues through the Ms. Lillian Dress pattern.

Simple patterns  
CHANGING LIVES

## INSTRUCTIONS

Note: Use ¼" seams unless otherwise stated.

### 1 Prepare pattern.

#### Dress Body (front and back) Diagram 1

- Draw one 10" x 19" rectangle.
- Mark the left (19") long edge "Place on fold."
- Mark neck opening 5¼" from fold at top short edge.
- Mark side seam 14" from bottom edge.
- Connect markings, and add a ¼" seam allowance to the diagonal sleeve line.
- Mark "Cut two on fold" on the Dress Body pattern.

#### Sleeve Diagram 2

- Draw an 8¼" x 9" rectangle.
- Mark left 9" edge "Place on fold."
- Mark top edge and side edge (opposite fold) 4¼" from the corner.
- Connect markings, and add a ¼" seam allowance to the diagonal line.
- Mark "Cut two on fold" on the Sleeve pattern.

#### Ruffle Diagram 3

- Draw a 5" x 10" rectangle.
- Mark one 5" edge "Place on fold."
- Mark "Cut two on fold" on the Ruffle pattern.

### 2 Prepare fabric.

- Fold selvages of fabric to the center of the fabric on each side. Diagram 4
- Fold the fabric in half lengthwise meeting the folded edges Diagram 5



Diagram 1

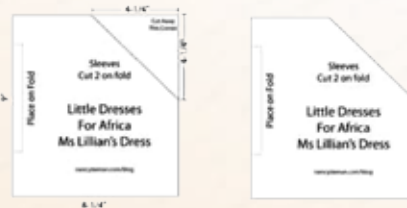


Diagram 2



Diagram 3



Diagram 4



Diagram 5

### 3 Cut patterns from fabric.

- Cut two of each pattern piece by placing the patterns on the **double folded edge** of the fabric.
- Place the ruffle pattern on the **double folded edge** of the fabric **twice** cutting a total of 4 ruffle sections. *Diagram 6*



Diagram 6

### 4 Press a 3/4" hem in each sleeve. Open hem and press edge to the hemline (about 3/8"). This process will make hemming easier later.

### 5 Stitch the sleeves to the front and back at neck opening stopping stitching 1/4" from armhole edges. Press seams open.

### 6 Stitch bias tape around neckline opening to form casing for elastic.

- Open out folded edge on one side of the bias.
- Turn and press under the short edge at beginning of bias tape 1/4", toward the wrong side.
- Start at center back, and place raw edge of bias at raw edge of neckline, right sides together. Stitch to neckline.
- Stop stitching a few inches from the beginning edge of the bias. Trim excess length, leaving enough to turn under 1/4" and meet the beginning and ending edges of the bias. *Diagram 7*
- Complete stitching the bias. Press bias to the wrong side of the neckline and topstitch in position to form the casing. *Diagram 8*

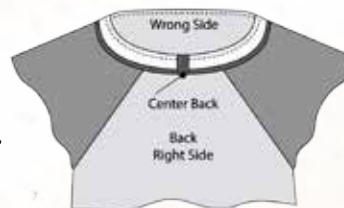


Diagram 7

### 7 Stitch front and back together at side seams. Finish seams if desired. Press seams open.

### 8 Hem sleeves.

- Fold up pre-pressed hems to wrong side of sleeves.
- Topstitch hems into position.

### 9 Complete elastic casing at neckline.

- Thread 1/4" elastic through the neckline and casing at the opening in the back of the casing.
- Stitch elastic ends together. Ease neckline gathers evenly around the neckline.

### 10 Complete ruffle.

- Stitch ruffle ends to make a complete circle.
- Hem the lower edge by turning up a double-folded 1/4" hem; press. Edge stitch.
- Gather the top raw edge of the ruffle using your favorite gathering methods.



Diagram 8

### 11 Join the top ruffle to bottom of dress, right sides together, adjusting gathers to fit. Stitch ruffle in place, using a 1/2" to 5/8" seam.

*Note from Nancy: I like to use Fuse 'N Gather tape for gathering. The results are fast and easy to accomplish. Press Fuse 'N Gather with blue threads facing up to the top edge of the wrong side of the ruffle fabric. Pull blue threads to gather. Diagram 9*



Diagram 9

*Donations and finished dresses can be sent to:*

**Little Dresses for Africa**  
21805 Woodruff Road  
Rockwood, MI 48173  
734-637-9064

Thank you for your help with Little Dresses for Africa. Together, we can make a difference... one little dress at a time.

*Get creative by adding pockets or trim to the dress for an extra special touch!*