



AOM and Dress a Girl Around the World Dress Guidelines IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR “GOD’S BEST DRESS”

- The dress each girl receives may be the ONLY dress she will EVER have. We want it to be a lovely, high-quality product in which they feel dignified and beautiful.
- Many girls live in areas where they are easy targets for trafficking. Does the dress you are making add to their dignity?
- Girls in some of these countries are considered 'less than human' just by virtue of being female, and they have no standing in their societies. We want them to know that they are loved by God and that they are indeed precious, with high standing in the eyes of God. We show them that by taking care to make the best dress possible.
- Some of these dresses will go to the poorest-of-the-poor, and the poor deserve nice things with good workmanship, not just leftovers or hand-me-downs. "The Lord hears the cry of the poor," we want to honor Him by honoring the girls who will receive dresses!
- Is the dress that you are making a dress that you would be proud to have your daughter or granddaughter wear? Is it “God’s best dress”?

FABRIC:

- **Cotton or cotton/poly blend fabric is necessary as it is the most durable and comfortable.** The dresses may be washed in rivers, creeks, or watering holes and may be scrubbed with rocks. Select beautiful, color-dense fabrics that will bring joy to the girl receiving this dress.
- Consider pattern size/design related to dress size – use nursery prints for baby dresses; use large prints for larger dresses.

FABRIC TO AVOID:

- Avoid white or light-colored fabric or thin fabric (gingham, for example, tends to be very thin.) We are trying to bring dignity to the girls, we do not want their skin to show through. Hold fabric up to a light source. Is it see-through? Hold your hand under the fabric. Can you see your hand through the fabric? If so, it’s too thin. If a thin fabric is used, please line it or turn it into a 2-layer, reversible dress.
- Avoid using fabric that has: Americana/patriotic; Halloween (skulls, pumpkins, ghosts); obvious Christmas (Santa, snowmen; though red/green holly or pine/berry patterns ok); Disney or any character fabric (Cinderella, SpongeBob, Star Wars etc.); camouflage or war imagery, or any printed English words. None of these things would be appropriate in a foreign country.
- **We no longer use pillowcases.** Do not use sheets, flannel, tablecloths, upholstery fabric, denim, or used fabric.

TIES for Sundresses: Ties should be 42-44” each. 36” is acceptable on small dresses.

- Ties should be made of double-wide, double fold bias tape.
- Make sure there is enough length to be tied into a bow; otherwise it’s only enough to tie in a knot, which the girls then might not be able to untie. Ties should also be

in one length (not pieced together) with the ends either turned under or zig-zagged across.

- Do not use ribbon of any kind for ties.

POCKETS:

- To place the pockets. Fold the dress in half, top to bottom. Iron a crease on that fold. Place the top of your pocket(s) right along the bottom of the crease and 2 to 3 inches in from the side seam unless you are using the angle pockets which are sewn into the side seam.
- Cut pockets in at least 6" Squares. Line or double the pocket for extra strength.
- Pocket fabric should coordinate both in color and pattern, i.e., please don't use a wild geometric pocket on fabric with a small, feminine floral print.
- Pockets should be sewn securely onto the dress—all edges should be finished—no pinking or zigzagging edges. Double-stitch at the tops and corners for added strength and durability.

SEAMS, HEMS, EDGES:

- Inside seams should be a strong selvage, or finished by serger or French seam.
- Hems need to be turned under and finished.
- All edges should be serged, turned under, or encased with bias tape - no raw edges.
- If using ribbon as decoration use only FABRIC ribbon (i.e. grosgrain), not CRAFT ribbon.
- If making a size 12 or 14 sundress, please put a 4" 'kick-pleat' in the side or backseam to allow for running and walking.

EMBELLISHMENTS:

- Should all be securely SEWN on, not glued.
- Could include appliques, buttons, braided or woven trims, ric rack, lace, or eyelet.

STYLES:

- We have been receiving requests for more dresses with sleeves. Consider making a simple cap sleeve dress, or a t-shirt dress.
- Be sure that dress width is proportionate with dress length.
- Look for instructions, patterns, and ideas online at <https://www.angelsofmercynewyork.org/dress-a-girl-cr2d>

Suggested Styles



LABELS:

- Ensure that each dress receives a Dress a Girl label prior to being sent out for distribution.

- If you are sewing large quantities of dresses – God BLESS you! Please talk with AOM about the possibility of you ironing labels as you sew the dresses, which would be very helpful to AOM.

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