Wee-Care Program Series

Wee-Care Gown or Sacque
By Nancy Newell

Wee-Care Series
Program #1
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Wee-Care Gown or Sacque

Simply constructed with front and back cut as one piece, this basic bishop gown or sacque was designed for premature babies - even the very smallest as well as average size newborns. Quick to make - only four pieces to cut, including the bias strip for the neckband.

Easily adapted to fit most all sizes of dolls and teddy bears, the pattern includes instructions on how to check the fit on your special doll or bear and make any necessary adaptations for a custom fit.

Supplies Needed

Suggested fabric - cotton or poly-cotton batiste or broadcloth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sacque or Long Dress</th>
<th>Short Dress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn (7 lbs. and over)</td>
<td>1 yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preemie (5-6 lbs.)</td>
<td>7/8 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small (3-4 lbs.)</td>
<td>3/4 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiny (1-2 lbs.)</td>
<td>5/8 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra tiny (less than 1 lb.)</td>
<td>3/8 yards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Optional lace for sleeves - 2/3 yard narrow flat lace edging
- Ribbon (Sacque only) - 1 l/2 yards of 1/8 -1/4" wide double-faced satin ribbon for larger sizes or 1 l/8 yard of 1/8" wide double-faced satin ribbon for smaller sizes.
- Thread and embroidery floss
- Smocking board and single stitch throat plate for sewing machine recommended

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Stitches of Love, 2714 N.E. 90th Street, Vancouver, WA 98665

Dedicated to the Rose Trellis Smockers of Portland, Oregon

This pattern was designed for use by the Rose Trellis Smockers of Portland, Oregon in 1986. As a community service project, they chose to make these small gowns and supply local hospitals for use when a baby dies. The project was named “Wee Care” by the Rose Trellis Smockers Board. In the dozen years since the pattern was developed, it has been used by hundreds of guilds, needlework groups, and individuals from all over the world. If you or your needlework guild would like to participate in a similar project in your own area, you have the designer’s permission to copy the pattern for any person participating. A special thank you to RTS members Heidi Nichols and Mary Sias for their help on the extra tiny size and hospital use hints.
Wee-Care Bishop Pattern

Please read ALL directions for cutting and assembly before beginning.

1. Cutting = pull threads and cut (or tear) following pieces:

A. Dress (front and back) is cut in one piece. On larger sizes, use full width of fabric with selvages removed. (Option: Selvages may be left in place for a quick finish for doll or bear garments.) See directions for finishing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Short Dress</th>
<th>Sacque or Long: Dress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn (7 lbs. And up)</td>
<td>44” wide x 16”</td>
<td>44” wide x 22”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preemie (5-6 lbs.)</td>
<td>44” wide x 14”</td>
<td>44” wide x 20”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small (3-4 lbs.)</td>
<td>36” wide x 12&quot;</td>
<td>36” wide x 18&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiny (1-2 lbs.)</td>
<td>36” wide x 10”</td>
<td>36” wide x 16”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Tiny (less than 1 lb.)</td>
<td>28” wide x 7”</td>
<td>23” wide x 12&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Sleeves: Cut two rectangles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Newborn</th>
<th>Preemie</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Tiny</th>
<th>Extra Tiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn</td>
<td>10” wide x 7 1/2”</td>
<td>10” wide x 6”</td>
<td>9” wide x 5”</td>
<td>9” wide x 4”</td>
<td>7” wide x 3”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preemie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Tiny</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Option: If sleeves are to be smocked, they may be cut 3/4” – 1” longer. Fold under this extra length before pleating and use folded edge as sleeve finish.

C. Neck Binding: Cut a bias strip. If using single bias, cut strip 1” wide. If using French (double) bias, cut strip 1 3/4” wide and fold in half lengthwise. See chart for length. Cut length includes 3/8” for back placket underlap and 1/4” to turn under at each end. Accuracy is important to ensure a good fit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Finished neck measurement (center back to center back)</th>
<th>Cut Bias strip length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>10 7/8”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preemie</td>
<td>8”</td>
<td>8 7/8”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>6 1/2”</td>
<td>8 7/8”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiny</td>
<td>5 1/2”</td>
<td>6 3/8”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Tiny</td>
<td>4 1/2”</td>
<td>5 5/8”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggested Layout - Newborn & Preemie Sizes

Suggested Layout - Small, Tiny & Extra Tiny Sizes
2. PREPARE FRONT/BACK:

A. To prepare armholes: fold dress front/back in half lengthwise, selvages matching, to find center front. Fold in half lengthwise again to find sides. Lay dress armhole on double fold with "seam/fold line" lined up with double folded edge. Cut out armholes.

Option: To ensure adequate margins for matching patterns and turning under at center back, mark 3/8” from center back and match this mark to center front to determine placement of armhole cutout.

B. Option: To prevent front hem from dipping: Refold dress front/back at center front: Mark 3/4” for newborn and preemie sizes, 1/2” for small and tiny or 3/8” for extra tiny down from top edge at center front. Draw a line from neck edge 3/8” in front of armhole to mark at center front. Cut on line. To control raveling at neck edge, you may wish to stay stitch 1/8” from neck edge prior to pleating.

3. PREPARE SLEEVES

A. Fold sleeves in half. Lay armhole guide at upper corner with “cutting line” matching cut edges (not folded edges.) Cut out armhole.

B. Sleeve treatments:

For gowns used in hospitals, do not smock sleeves since sleeve may be difficult to put on over an IV or bandage. To control fullness, you may make a little (3/8” to 5/8” each side) inverted box pleat at center of sleeve about 1/2” above lower sleeve edge. Hold pleat in place with an embroidered flower or tiny ribbon bow.

For gowns on which a smocked sleeve is desired, pleat two rows 1/2” above bottom edge of sleeve. On larger sizes, use full spaces. On smaller sizes, use half-spaces. Use pleating threads long enough to pull sleeve out flat after pleating.
Optional: If you cut sleeves slightly longer (3/4"-1"), you may fold this extra length under (to inside of sleeve) before pleating. After pleating and smocking, the raw edge will be caught in the smocking and folded edge becomes sleeve finish.

C. Sleeve finishes: Choose one of the following methods to finish sleeve edge:

Roll and whip edge by hand (only on 100% cotton) - add lace edging if desired.
Make a tiny hem by hand or machine. (Try your hemmer foot).
Use French machine sewing technique to add lace.

French Machine Sewing Hint
To attach lace edging to fabric - with right sides together, lay lace edging 1/8" from fabric edge. Set machine on zigzag stitch with width as wide as possible and stitch length about 25 stitches per inch; not quite a satin stitch. Zigzag, catching fabric and lace heading with left swing of zigzag, going completely off fabric on right side. Fabric will roll up into a tiny hem with lace heading.

D. Use a narrow French seam to sew underarm seams. (With wrong sides together, sew 1/8" wide seam; trim "fuzzies" from edge, press seam and fold with right sides together; seam 1/8" wide.)

4. SET IN SLEEVES:

Use narrow French seams to set in sleeves. Be sure seams are just 1/8" wide for ease in running through pleater. Remember: Sew wrong sides together first, trim fuzzies and sew second seam with right sides together. Caution: Sew BOTH sleeves in wrong sides together, before trimming and sewing RIGHT sides together. This will ensure that both sleeves are on the right side of fabric. Option: Serge this curved seam instead of making French seam to make pleating easier.

5. PLEAT AND SMOCK

A. Roll garment on a dowel, folding in excess fabric at sleeves. For ease in pleating over seams, have wrong side up while pleating so you can see seams as they enter pleater. Seams should enter pleater parallel to bars with seam allowance toward seams. Caution: Pleating should be done at the very edge of the pleater in order to ease in sleeves.

On larger sizes (newborn and preemie) pleat 5-7 full-spaced rows using half space needles as well. Have first needle 1/4" from neck edge. Use this as a holding row and begin smocking on row 1 1/2.

On smaller sizes, (small, tiny, and extra tiny), pleat 5-7 half-space rows. Have first needle 1/4" from neck edge. Use this as a holding row and begin smocking design on second pleating thread.

B. Pull up gathering threads and block into circular shape. (Note: Use finished neck measurement as a guide to determine how tight to pull up neck edge.)
C. Smock, centering design at center front. Backsmock first row and begin your design on second gathering thread. Backsmocked row will be used as a guide when applying bias neckline. (Adjust your tension as you smock so bottom rows of design have looser tension. Even on these small garments, you may have a “turtleneck effect” if you do not adjust your tension.) Leave approximately 3/4” to 1 1/4” unsmocked on each side of center back. Remove all gathering threads except top thread at neck edge.

D. Smock sleeves if desired, leaving 1/4” on smaller sizes and 1/2” on larger sizes unsmocked on each side of underarm seam. Remove gathering threads.

6. **FINISHING**

A. Hospital gowns: With selvages removed, finish center back opening by folding under 1/4” - 3/8” twice. Right side should be folded back even with smocking. On left side, divide unsmocked area in thirds and turn under twice. This will leave a small underlap on which to sew tiny snaps or ribbon ties. Hand hem or machine stitch edges in place.

B. Non-hospital gowns: Sew center back seam, leaving 6” or more down from neck. Finish open area of seam as noted in 6A. (An optional finish for back opening is to use a continuous lap placket. However, these garments are so small that lap plackets seem to add too much bulk.)

C. Finish neck edge with bias strip: Top gathering row should be backsmocked. Trim any uneven edges above backsmocking. Cut bias strip to desired length. French bias: Fold bias strip in half lengthwise and press. With right sides together and raw edges even, pin bias strip to garment with about 1/4” of bias extending past each edge at center back. Pull up gathering thread to adjust garment to fit bias strip. Seam 1/4” from neck edge. Check to be sure seam is an even distance from first row of smocking and fix any unevenness. Stitch again 1/8” toward neck edge from first stitching. Trim seam close to second row of stitching. Turn under ends of bias strip. Slipstitch fold edge to inside.

D. For neck closing, use a doll button with thread loop, a tiny snap or ribbon ties. Use additional snaps or ribbon ties down remaining back opening.

E. Make ribbon casing for sacque:

For ribbon bow in front - make a small buttonhole about 1 1/4” above bottom edge at center front. Fold up bottom edge 1/2” and then fold under 1/2” again. Buttonhole should be centered in middle of casing. Machine stitch along both folded edges. Thread ribbon through casing.

For bow in back - make casing, omitting buttonhole. If garment is partially sewn up center back, leave a small area of seam unstitched about 3/4” to 1” above bottom edge so ribbon can be pulled through.

F. For dress, hem with 2” hem
VARIATIONS

Because the front/back is cut on the straight of grain, you can dress up the bishop by adding different types of hem treatments. Consider tucks, ruffles, lace edging, fancy bands, or lace scallops, etc. Try the sacque in other fabrics - small prints flannel, or cotton interlock. Use brighter colors when smocking casual dresses.

DOLLS AND TEDDY BEARS

Because of the easy fit and wide range of sizes, the Wee-Care bishop can be used for many dolls and teddy bears. Just three measurements need to be checked, and possibly adjusted, to custom fit the bishop to your doll or teddy bear. Thankfully, bears and dolls are not really fussy about the fit of their clothes, but they do like to appear well-dressed! Begin with the size you guess is closest to your doll or bear and make the following three checks, adjusting your pattern as needed.

Length: The dress/sacque length and sleeve length can easily be adjusted by cutting the rectangles longer or shorter. For the front/back piece, compare suggested cutting length to your desired length at center back, adding hem allowances. Compare sleeve length to measurements taken from neck, over shoulder and down to desired sleeve length. Shorten or lengthen as needed.

Neck Circumference: Compare your doll’s or teddy bear’s neck measurement with length of neckline bias strip. The bias strip should be about 1” longer than neck circumference to allow for turn-under at ends, overlap, and ease. Cut strip to desired length and pull up gathers to match.

Armhole depth: The easiest method of checking armhole depth is to cut suggested armhole from corner of scrap fabric and test fit. The underarm should fit comfortably under your doll’s or bear’s arm, with top edge reaching to neckline. Make any adjustment needed by adding or taking away from top of armhole cutting guide to make armhole deeper or shallower.

Use this line when cutting sleeves
Use this line when cutting front/back

Wee Care Bishop
Tiny Size

Wee Care Bishop Gown
Armhole - Smaller Size

Wee Care Bishop Gown
Armhole Guide - Newborn Size
Suggested Smocking Designs

Basic color (color 1) - choose white, pale cream, ecru or a pastel shade close to your fabric color.
Leaves - for all designs, use a soft green such as DMC 369 or 504. For little boys - use blue flowers or just omit them.

Newborn - Design I
Row 1  Cable - color 1
Row 1-1/2 3 cables, 1 wave stitch, 3 cables, 1 wave stitch, repeat - color 1
Row 2-1/2 Reverse row above - color 1
Row 2-1/2 3 cables, 6-step trellis down, down cable, 6-step trellis up, repeat - color 1
Row 3 Repeat row above - color 1

Add a bullion knot rose and lazy daisy leaves to every other heart. Use two shades of one color for bullion knot roses, with the darker color in middle. Try pale pink roses (818 and 963), pale blue (775 and 3325), antique rose (225 and 224) or plum pink (2689 and 3688), or pick your own favorite combination.

Newborn - Design II
Row 1  Cable - color 1
Row 1 2-step trellis - color 2
Rows 2-1/2 Reverse 2-step trellis - color 2
Row 3 Repeat 2-step trellis - color 1
Row 3 5-step trellis - color 1
Row 3-1/2 Repeat 5-step trellis - color 2

Add a cable flowerette and lazy daisy leaves to every other heart. For the "shadow color" (color 2), use a slightly darker or grayish shade of color 1. (Try DMC 78 for the shadow color with a pastel pink such as 963.)

Preemie
Row 1  Cable - color 1
Row 1 Baby wave - color 1
Row 2-1/2 Reverse baby wave - color 1
Row 2-1/2 3-trellis - color 1

Add a French knot flower bud (in a favorite flower color) and lazy daisy leaves (in light green) to every other heart.

Small
Row 1  Cable - color 1
Row 2 2-step trellis - color 1
Row 2 5-step trellis - color 1

Add French knot flower buds and lazy daisy leaves to every other heart. Try three different pastel shades for the French knots (such as pale pink 776, lavender 210 and yellow 3076).

Tiny and Extra Tiny
Row 1  Cable - color 1
Row 1-3/4 Baby Wave over 1/4 space - color 1
Row 1-3/4 3-step trellis - color 1

Add a French knot flower bud (in favorite flower color) and lazy daisy leaves (in light green) to every other heart.

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