

## Sewing Instructions

### MARY

Firstly lay out the piece of fabric on a clean, flat surface - the floor is fine - and **read through the instructions**. Do this before you cut anything out, so that you understand what to do next.

Following the outside line and using sharp scissors suitable for fabric, cut out the pattern pieces. Please note the name of each piece, especially the letters (F, NF etc) as this is what each piece is called throughout the sewing instructions. It may help to cut out the titles and pin them to the centre of their pattern piece so that you don't get confused while you are sewing.

Starting with the front (F), neaten the seam allowance of the centre front seam using a zig-zag stitch - or an overlocker, if you have one. Repeat on the other side. With right sides facing, match the two front (F) pieces at the notches on the hemline and at centre front. Using the notch at the hem as the seam allowance, stitch up until you are level with the notch at centre front. Reverse stitch at both ends to stop the seam unravelling.

With right sides of the fabric facing each other, place piece F (front) on top of piece B (back). Line up the shoulder seam, making sure that the arm edge matches neatly. Pin the seam allowing 1.5cm seam allowance. Many sewing machines have this marked on their footplate. Stitch together and repeat for other side. Neaten the seam with a zig-zag stitch or an over locker, if you have one.

Using a steam iron and a **clean tea towel to protect the fabric**, press the seam neatly so that the fabric is smooth from the outside.

Take piece S (the sleeve) and take note of the construction notches along the sleeve head. The **central notch matches the shoulder seam**, the single notch to the notch on piece F and the double notch to the notches on piece B. With the right side of the body pieces facing up, place the right side of the sleeve over top, matching the shoulder seam and taking care that you have the front of the sleeve matching piece F. Pin the centre of the sleeve to the shoulder seam and pin the edge of the sleeve, front and back, to line up neatly with the edge of the body. To get a neat finish to the shoulder seam, you need to stretch the two pieces together, so instead of pinning every few cm, use your fingers to hold the pieces in place and allow the fabric to curve together smoothly as you stitch. Remember to reverse stitch at either end to secure the seam. Using small, sharp scissors, clip the **sleeve seam allowance only** to within 3mm of the stitching line every 2cm or so to allow the sleeve to sit smoothly. Neaten the seam with a zig-zag stitch.

With right sides facing, match the sleeve hem and the side seams to the hem of the body. You will notice that the sleeve is slightly assymetric. This is to allow the sleeve to shape to the arm. Gently ease the fuller side (back of sleeve) to the smaller side (front of sleeve). If you don't feel confident doing this with your fingers, run a gathering thread along the fuller side and pull it up until it measures the same as the smaller side. Pin in place. Allow 1.5cm seam allowance and sitich from sleeve hem to body hem. Repeat on the other side. Neaten the seam with a zig-zag stitch - or an overlocker,

if you have one. Before you hem the sleeves, it might be a good idea for your little Mary to try it on so that you can set the length. Mark with a pin or two. Neaten the edge with a zig-zag stitch - or an overlocker if you have one and then turn under the amount pinned as the hem. Stitch round and reverse stitch to stop the stitching unravelling.

Now for the neck facing. Take the Front facings (FF) and place right side to right side. Measure on the costume the distance from the neck edge to the stitching line of the front seam. Measure this same distance on the front facing FF and pin together. Stitch from the bottom edge of the facing to the pin. **The seam allowance is the same at that of the centre front seam on the costume.** Reverse stitch at either end to stop the seam unravelling. Take the Neck Facing NF and with right sides facing, place the front facings FF over top. Match the shoulder seams taking care to line up the neck edge, pin in place and using a 1.5cm seam allowance stitch in place with a reverse stitch at either end to stop the seam unravelling.

Using a steam iron and a **clean tea towel to protect the fabric**, press the seam neatly so that the fabric is smooth from the outside.

Neaten the hem edge with a zig-zag stitch, taking care to keep the ironed seam flat as it goes under the presser foot.

With the right sides facing, pin the facing in place matching the shoulder seams and the neck edges. You'll need to pull the fabric a little to get the front of the body and the front of the facings to sit neatly, but put the machine needle into the fabric and then stitch round the neck line until you come back to the centre front, again pull the fabric gently to get the facing and the front body to line up. Reverse stitch at both ends to secure the stitching line. Using small, sharp scissors clip the seam allowance around the curved areas of the seam to within 3mm of the stitching line about every 2cm. This will help the stitching line to sit smoothly. You will need to clip the **body** in the same way where the facing and centre front seams meet to allow the fabric to turn through. Now, turn the facing through to the inside, place the costume over the ironing board and using a steam iron and a **clean tea towel to protect the fabric**, press the seam open neatly so that the fabric is smooth. You will need to coax the stitching line around the curved areas, so pin in place to guide the fabric. Then, using the width of the presser foot as a guide, top-stitch around the neckline to give a smooth finish. This can be in a contrast thread or a decorative stitch, as you so wish.

Finally hem the bottom of the costume. Neaten the edge of the fabric with a zig-zag stitch - or an overlocker if you have one. Turn under a 3cm hem, pin in place and stitch round, remembering to reverse stitch at either end to stop the stitching unravelling.

Take the ribbon from the kit, cut it in half (with the cut on a diagonal to stop it fraying) and with a threaded needle stitch in place at the top of the neck opening.

And there you are, ready to embrace the Christ Child.

If you're a confident sew-er, follow the quick-sewing guide and use your own method of construction.

**Quick-Sewing Guide**

Centre front seam, shoulder seams, sleeves, underarm seams, facing, attach to body and hem.