

# Instructions for Making the Duffel Bag

The bags for our *Bags of Love* need to be sturdy; they will be used a lot. Very often CPS tries to reunite families, so the children get home visitations, when they do, they use this bag as an “overnighter”. We try to use fabric that is like a lightweight slacks material such as sailcloth, gabardine, corduroy, etc. You get the idea. Denim is too heavy; it does not allow the bag to close enough when drawn closed.

We do not make all the bags alike (the same size but not of the same material). We use prints, interesting patterns, children’s prints, etc. We also make the pocket a contrasting print or color. We want to brighten their lives as much as possible. You can make the pocket of the same fabric if you can’t find something that coordinates with the bag material.

Quite often you can find these fabrics at Wal-mart in their bargain bin for a \$1.00 per yard. (Many are very interesting, and quite often you will find expensive fabrics that are very nice.) I always keep a check on it. It’s much easier if you use the 42”-45” fabric because the bag is designed to use that width. You can use 60” wide fabric, but you need to change your layout.

**Bags:** You will need a piece 45” x 30”. You will get six bags out of five yards. If purchasing 60” wide fabric you will get eight bags out of five yards.

You can use knits, but you must use a different layout, and you will have some waste. You never know what you will receive as a donation, so be prepared for anything.

**Pocket and Flap:** You will need one flap, cut one piece, and one pocket piece. Select fabric that will co-ordinate with the bag fabric. You can cut ten pockets and ten flaps out of 1 1/8 yd of 45” wide fabric.

**Rope:** Use 5/16” white cotton rope. The rope can be found in the fabric department. It works very well. You will need 45” for each bag. We usually buy 30 yards; that is enough for 24 bags.

**Buttons:** You need good sturdy 1” buttons. We find that the ones with the metal shank in the back are the best. They give enough room to accommodate the layers of fabric and open and close easier. You may find a good assortment by asking people when they throw away a garment to cut off the buttons and save them for you. You may also use Velcro but it must be the sew on type. If using Velcro you will eliminate the steps for making the button holes and, of course, the button on the pockets and the flaps.

## Starting The Bag

You will need:

Cut 1 piece for the bag: 45”x 30”

Cut 1 pocket: 9”x 13 1/2”

Cut 1 pocket flap: 9”x 6 1/2”

5/16” white cotton rope: 45”

Button: 1”

## Preparing the bag

1. Set your sewing machine stitch on zigzag, the closest stitch and widest zigzag (Figure 1). Stitch across one 45” edge of bag. This will be the top of the bag. It will bind off



*Figure 1*

the edge, it will not unravel, this makes less bulk for the top.

2. For the openings for the drawstring, measure over from the 30" edge 11 1/2" and make a mark (Figure 2). Now measure down from the top 1 1/2" to where the other mark is, make a mark. This is where you are going to place two-1" buttonholes 1/2" apart.



*Figure 2*

Cut a piece of interfacing about 2"x2" centered behind the buttonholes, this is to reinforce them so they won't tear in use (Figure 3). Make the buttonholes.



*Figure 3*

## **Pocket**

1. Take the pocket piece and zigzag along the top edge.

2. Fold over to the right side 2" from the top. Stitch down on the 2" side with a 1/4" seam allowance on both sides (Figure 4). Turn right side out.



*Figure 4*

3. Press, folding a 1/4" seam allowance on all remaining sides to match the top (Figure 5). It is now ready to sew onto the bag.



*Figure 5*

4. Center the pocket 6” below the buttonholes. Pin in place and top stitch onto the bag, reinforcing at the top on both sides (Figure 6).



*Figure 6*

### **Pocket Flap**

1. Fold flap right sides together, making it 9 x 3 ¼”. Sew both ends with ¼” seam allowance. Turn right side out and press. Zigzag across the cut edge to bind (Figure 7). Make a buttonhole in the center.



*Figure 7*

2. Place the zigzagged edge ¼” above the pocket lining it up with the pocket. Sew across with ¼” seam allowance (Figure 8).



*Figure 8*

3. Fold flap down towards the pocket and top stitch across (Figure 9).



*Figure 9*

## Sewing the bag

1. Fold the bag in half, pin. Sew across the bottom and up the side (Figure 10). Bag should measure 22”x 30” at this point.



*Figure 10*

2. At the top edge, fold over 1” and sew around with ¼” seam allowance, forming the casing for the drawstring (Figure 11).

3. Insert rope (drawstring) and place a knot on both ends so it won’t slip out. Before inserting the rope wrap a piece of tape around the end so it won’t fray. Use a safety pin to help guide it through the casing just formed. Remove the tape and tie knots on the ends.

4. Sew the button on the pocket and you are done!



*Figure 11*

“ IT'S MY VERY OWN ”