1. CUTTING OUT and MARKING:

- Layer the body fabric (blue print) and lining fabric (pink stripe) together on your cutting table so that you can cut both layers together, ensuring they will match in size and shape.
- Cut out 2 fronts (1 of body fabric and 1 of lining fabric) on the fold
- Cut out 2 mirrored-pairs of backs (1 of body fabric and 1 of lining fabric)
- Mark your notches on all fabric pieces, from the triangles on the paper pattern. This will be very helpful when stitching, to avoid confusion. Either snip 1/8” notches (seam allowances are 1/4”) or use a fabric marker or a plain pencil.

2. EMBELLISH:

- (Optional): Decorate front of gown on the body fabric. Often angel gowns are made of donated wedding dresses, and using decorative trim elements
from the original gown can make each gown distinct and special. (I’m skipping that part here, because I’m just showing construction).

3. SHOULDER-SEAMS:

- Pin left back and right back to front at shoulder-seams, with right sides of fabric together, matching SINGLE-notches. Stitch, and press open. Repeat for lining:

4. STITCH BODY TO LINING:

- Pin lining to body, right sides of fabric together.
- Stitch center-back, leaving a 2” opening for turning inside out later.
- Stitch neckline
- Stitch sleeve hems together, body fabric to lining:
5. TURN INSIDE OUT:
• **Clip the inside curve** of the neckline, and trim off the center-back neckline corners:
- Turn the garment inside out by pulling the back pieces through the shoulders into the front.

- Press. Your neckline and sleeve hems are already finished!
Now it gets a bit tricky, but once you get it, it will make sense, I promise!

6. STITCH SIDE-SEAMS:

- **Pin side-seams front to back, right sides of fabric together**, matching the DOUBLE-notches. Start by “pinching” the sleeves together and pinning at the sleeve underarm seams. Then pin along the sides, down to the hems. Your fabrics should be pinned outer-fabric-to-outer-fabric, and lining-fabric-to-lining-fabric:
• **Stitch side-seams, starting at the hem**, going up around the underarm, and down to the other hem. Go slowly, since this step is not “flat” sewing….its very curved and 3-dimensional at this stage, so you’ll need to stop and adjust the fabric under your presser foot every half-inch or so.
When you are done sewing this seam, **clip the under-arm curves** so that the underarm will lay flat after turning inside-out:
• **Press the side-seams open** as far as your iron allows. You should now have sort of a mish-mosh thing that looks like this:
This is the reason that traditional patterns don’t use this construction method! It’s not difficult to DO, just difficult to EXPLAIN in tiny line drawings. Trust me, this is how apparel is constructed in factories, as they are always looking for the most efficient methods. Okay, almost done!

7. HEMMING:

- Pin the hem front to back, right sides of fabric together, matching TRIPLE-notches.
- Stitch across the hem, clip off the corners:
Pull the garment inside out, using the opening you left in the center-back seam, and voila! Totally clean-finished seams throughout:
8. FINISHING:

- Final press, then stitch the turn-about opening shut. You can edge-stitch the entire outside edge, closing the center-back opening as you go.
• Next stitch on Velcro at center-back. The nurses like Velcro because it is easier to dress the little angels. I use Sew-On “Soft and Flexible”, and cut the strips lengthwise to half their width. Be sure to sew the “fuzzy” side facing the body, and the “scratchy” side away from the body.
Now I'll show you again, this time with ribbon ties for the back, and fabric cut from a wedding dress. First step is to wash the dress. To make washing easier, separate the bodice from the skirt and the petticoat. Straight into the washer (gentle cycle) and then hang up to dry:
1. CUTTING OUT and MARKING:

- Cut out all angel gown pieces as before:
Layer the body fabric and lining fabric together on your cutting table so that you can cut both layers together, ensuring they will match in size and shape.

- Cut out 2 fronts (1 of body fabric and 1 of lining fabric) on the fold
- Cut out 2 mirrored-pairs of backs (1 of body fabric and 1 of lining fabric)
- Mark your notches on all fabric pieces, from the triangles on the paper pattern.

2. EMBELLISH:

- Decorate the Front, using lace appliques or trim from the wedding dress:

3. SHOULDER-SEAMS:

- Pin left back and right back to front at shoulder-seams, with right sides of fabric together, matching SINGLE-notches. Stitch, and press open. Repeat for lining:
(Optional Back Ties): if you want to close the garment back with ties, add the ribbons now. If you prefer to use Velcro, that will be added as the last step after the garment is complete):

- **Cut six pieces of narrow ribbon, each 8" long, and pin or tape to the right side of the center back edges**: I use plain old Scotch Tape to keep the ribbons out of the way, and take it off immediately after stitching. The top ribbon pair can be placed about 1/2" from the neckline, the next pair 3" down the center-back, and the last pair another 3" down:
Continue construction same as the first sample:

4. STITCH BODY TO LINING:

- **Place lining on top of outer body**, pin along center back, neckline, and sleeve hems.
- **Stitch center back**, leaving a 2” opening for turning inside-out later.
- **Stitch neckline and sleeve hems:**
5. TURN INSIDE OUT:

- **Clip inside curve** of neckline seam allowance, being careful not to cut into stitching:
- Turn inside-out by pulling the backs through the shoulders towards the front:
• Press lightly…look how pretty with the neckline and sleeve hems already finished!

6. STITCH SIDE-SEAMS:

• Pin side-seams front to back, right sides of fabric together, matching the double-notches. Start by “pinching” the sleeves together, and pinning at the sleeve underarm seam.
• Then pin outside fabric front-to-back all the way down to the hem, and pin lining fabric front-to-back all the way down to the hem:. Your fabrics should be pinned outer-to-outer and lining-to-lining:
If that sounds confusing, or you’re just not sure, look at the print fabric picture again; you should have outside-fabric-to-outside-fabric (front to back), lining-fabric-to-lining-fabric (front to back):
- **Stitch the side-seams** starting at the hem, going up and around the underarm, and down to the other hem. Slow and steady as you stitch the underarm area.
- **Clip under-arm curves:**
• Press the side-seams open as far as your iron will allow:
Now you should have your weird mish-mosh shaped thing:
If you’re worried, you can lift up the skirt and flip it inside out to see what it’s going to look like:
7. HEMMING:

- Turn it back outside in again….time to finish the hem: pin all the way across, stitch, clip corners.
● Now go back to the center-back where you (hopefully) left a 2” opening in the seam for turning. If you forgot to do this (it happens) just get a seam ripper and carefully un-stitch the center-back seam for about 2”. Pull the garment completely inside out, press:
8. FINISHING:

- You can machine-edge-stitch (or hand-stitch if you prefer) the center-back opening, and you are done!
Some notes about sewing for hospitals: every hospital has different needs, so be sure to check with the NICU department before making items to donate. I have read so many stories about groups and individuals putting in time and energy sewing items that weren’t exactly what was needed for their local hospital. The nurses know best, so check first!

- **GARMENT TYPES:** *Bereavement apparel usually must open completely in back;* sometimes side access is required in final stages of life for access to tubes and wires, especially for infants in the cardiac unit.
- **CLOSURES:** Some hospitals prefer Velcro for ease of dressing. Some hospitals prefer snaps (plastic such as Dritz Clear or KAM snaps; never metal as it gets too hot/cold).
- **BLANKETS and ACCESSORIES:** hand-sewn blankets or hats to match angel-gowns are a thoughtful touch, as parents like to take them home as a remembrance
- **FABRICS**: For bereavement items, soft and smooth fabrics such as those from donated wedding gowns are fine. Some hospitals have a need for bereavement apparel in cotton, and some for bereavement apparel in colors, depending on regional ethnic groups.
- **APPAREL SIZES**: depending on the size of the NICU, the hospital services offered, and regional factors, some hospitals need more items for Micro-Preemies (under 2 lbs), others need regular Preemie sizes, or full-term.
- **GENDER**: There is a greater need for male than female infant bereavement apparel: “*In the U.S. in 2013, the overall infant mortality rate for male infants was 6.51 per 1,000 births, 21% higher than the rate for female infants (5.39%)*”