

## Sew Much Fun!

### Future Christian Homemakers Teacher's Notes

Many girls enjoy sewing and begin fashioning fabric scraps into doll clothes when they are quite young. Wise is the mother who encourages her daughter and teaches her basic sewing skills.

It's sad to hear grown women admit they don't know how to sew on a button! For other women, like my mother-in-law, sewing has been a lifelong pleasure. Her skill kept her family clothed inexpensively and now, in later years, it's a creative hobby that provides hours of enjoyment.

**Everyone needs to learn the basics:** how to hem a skirt, mend a seam, sew on a button. With these skills, a woman can keep her family's clothes in good repair. Fortunately, these are not hard to learn and most can be done by hand, without expensive equipment.

It is helpful to have a **sewing machine**. A basic, portable model is fine for beginners and for most sewing projects. Many new machines have a host of computerized functions. If you can afford one and plan to do a lot of sewing, these are wonderful. But for average use, a basic model will do fine. Most sewing machine stores sell used or reconditioned machines at reasonable prices. You may find, as I did, that women in your church have a machine they will donate or lend to your class.

What other **sewing equipment** do the girls need? A sewing basket or plastic craft tote helps keep everything organized. I ask each girl to have the following items *labeled* with their name or initials:

- Sewing shears – Sharp scissors used only for sewing
- Packet of needles for hand sewing
- Straight pins
- Pin cushion
- Seam gauge
- Thread: White & black plus any other colors they need
- Seam ripper

All of these can be purchased inexpensively at Wal-Mart or a fabric store. The girls can add any other notions they wish, but these will suffice for most basic projects.

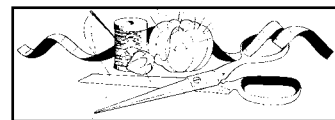
Before **sewing by machine** on fabric, have the girls **sew on paper** without any thread in the machine. This practice helps them learn to control the speed of their machine. Use notebook paper and have them sew on the lines straight across the page. Then draw curved and zigzag lines on plain paper, and have them sew on these. After sewing on paper, always change your machine needle; discard the old needle safely (inside a soda can or bottle, or carefully rolled up in a paper bag.)



Age 90 and still sewing!  
My mother-in-law sews a quilt that will become a treasured heirloom.



Trang makes a pillowcase as she sews for the first time on a machine!



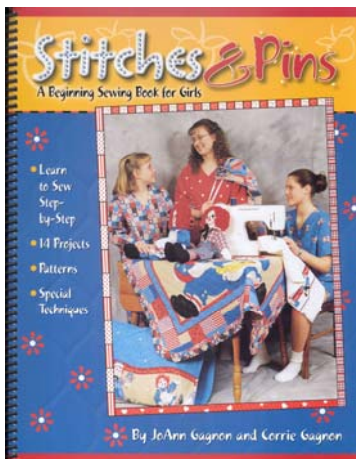
I like to begin by teaching **hand sewing**. Even when we sew by machine, most projects require some finishing touches by hand. My grandmother, in the 1920's, did not have a sewing machine and made many of her family's clothes entirely by hand! We've come a long way, but it's still essential to know how to sew by hand. Be sure the girls know how to sew a simple running stitch, and how to sew on buttons.



The girls enjoy a variety of sewing projects.



## *Sewing Curriculum*



A good sewing curriculum is essential if you want to teach, or learn, to sew well. JoAnn Gagnon, of Bunkhouse Sewing, has written wonderful books to take your youngest child (preschool), to your oldest through all the sewing skills they need to learn.

“**Stitches and Pins**” is written for the beginning seamstress in an easy to understand, step-by-step format. Patterns for girls sizes 8 – 16 are included. The projects begin with a simple pillowcase and progress to basic garments. The diagrams and instructions are clear and easy to follow.

Projects in this book include a laundry bag, doll quilt, hostess apron, reversible vest, skirt, pajamas, and more. Instruction pages teach the parts of the sewing machine, how to use patterns, how to pin, use bias tape, apply a facing, etc.

“**Pins and Needles**” is an intermediate sewing book that continues what the girls learn in “Stitches and Pins.” They learn to sew waistbands, zippers, and set-in sleeves. It includes quilting projects and projects using the serger.

**“Catch the Bug: 25 Fun & Simple Sewing Projects”** is designed for young children. With adult help, they can learn to make a drawstring purse, puppet, headband, pillowcase, tooth fairy pillow, and much more. Be sure to watch the Instructional Video: Teaching Young Children to Sew. It is amazing to see what a three year old can do with help from mother!

JoAnn has written devotional books to be used along with the sewing books so you can develop and train your child’s character as they learn to sew.

**“Buckles and Bobbins”** is a beginning sewing book for boys with projects they will love. **“Pintucks and Lace”** teaches heirloom sewing techniques.

Many of JoAnn’s books are available as e-books as well as hard copy, and patterns are included.

Whoever you are teaching, or if you just want to learn sewing yourself, you will find what you need at JoAnn’s website, [www.bunkhousesewing.com](http://www.bunkhousesewing.com) Be sure to watch the Instructional Slide Shows, and go to the “Where to Begin” section for helpful advice on sewing machines, fabric, supplies and notions. Sign up for the free “Tips for Teaching Children to Sew.”

Even if you never learned to sew, you can learn along with your child, with the help of JoAnn’s books. Sewing is an important life skill that helps children learn much more than just sewing! They also learn to concentrate, develop their attention span, practice patience, and learn from their mistakes. Eye-hand coordination is developed as well as coordinating the foot pedal on the machine with what they are doing with their hands.

Perhaps the best part is the joy and satisfaction they experience as they complete a project! You don’t need to teach self-esteem! It will be the natural outcome as they sew clothes, gifts, and items for their room. Happy Sewing!