

## Fabric Gift Bags

**Directions** Each December, it is estimated that Americans throw away four million tons of wrapping paper and shopping bags. You can reduce waste by giving gifts in attractive, reusable fabric bags. Follow the simple steps below to make your own gift bags.

- 1 Gather materials.** Here's what you'll need:
  - One-half yard of fabric at least 42 inches wide.
  - Two feet or more of cloth ribbon (not paper ribbon), about ½ inch wide, in a color that coordinates with the fabric.
  - A measuring tape, scissors, and pins.
  - Needle and thread, or sewing machine and thread.
- 2 Cut the fabric.** Cut a piece of fabric 12 inches by 42 inches. (This makes a finished bag measuring 10 inches by 20 inches. As you become familiar with the basic bag pattern, you can adapt it to make larger or smaller bags.)
- 3 Fold the fabric.** Fold the fabric in half lengthwise, right side in. (The right side is the side of the fabric that you want to be on the outside of the bag.)
- 4 Sew the fabric together.** Either by hand using small stitches or with the machine, stitch one long side of the fabric from the fold to the opposite end. This stitching line should be 1 inch from the edge of the fabric. Repeat on the other long side. Be sure to secure the stitching at each end. The basic outline of the bag is now completed.
- 5 Turn the bag inside out.** When you turn the bag inside out, the fabric's right side turns to the outside and the seams turn to the inside of the bag.
- 6 Hem the top of the bag.** Fold the top edge of the bag to the inside by about 1 inch and hem it, either by hand or on the machine.
- 7 Cut the ribbon.** Cut a piece of ribbon at least 24 inches long. Fold it in half lengthwise, right side in. Pin the folded edge to the bag. Place it about 2½ inches below the top of the bag (the opening), positioning it at the center of one side.
- 8 Attach the ribbon.** With a few stitches (by hand or on the machine), attach the ribbon securely to the bag.
- 9 Use the bag.** To use your gift bag, place a gift of the appropriate size in the bag. Then gather the top of the bag together, pull the ribbon around, and tie a bow.