

Projects

Special Occasion Serger Smocked Dress



Learn how to pleat and smock using your serger, while making this adorable special occasion dress for your special little girl. This dress will become an heirloom garment that will be passed down through your family for many generations to come!

Skill Level: Advanced

Created by: Kelly Laws, Marketing Project Manager

Supplies:

- Baby Lock Evolution
- Baby Lock Sewing Machine
- Clear foot
- Invisible zipper foot
- Vogue Pattern –Teresa Layman Design # 7435
(or similar dress pattern)
- 4 Spools Maxi-Lock serger thread to match fabrics
- 1 Spool ivory embroidery thread
- All-purpose thread to match fabrics
- Ivory silk dupioni for sleeves and collar (view B)
- Red shantung for dress
- Three 5/8" buttons
- 2 ½ yards ivory mini piping



¼ yard lightweight knit fuse interfacing
Press-away stabilizer
Scissors
Hem gauge
Chalk marking pencil
Ruler

Instructions:

1. Cut out the pattern pieces as directed on the pattern guide sheet. If you are using a different pattern, the dress front piece will need to be the full width of the fabric to accommodate the pleating.
2. Using the smocking template as a guide, chalk guideline rows for the stitching across the entire width of the front of the dress. Used here are 9 rows ½” apart.
3. Thread the Evolution serger for a three thread cover stitch. Set the stitch length to 4 and the differential feed to 2.
4. **Choose your serger method:**

Serger Pleating with Decorative Sewing Stitches: To do this method, thread the serger with all four threads matching the fabric. Serge the rows with the needle threads on the right side of the fabric.

Note: Keep the serger tails from each row free from the next row as you will need these extra thread tails to gather the fabric tighter.



Serger with Chain Looper as Smocking Stitches: To use this method, thread the serger with the three needle threads matching the fabric and the chain looper in the decorative contrast thread. Serge the rows with the needle threads on the wrong side of the fabric.



5. Once all rows have been stitched, use a pin to pull the center needle thread at the ends from the thread chain in each row. With even tension, carefully gather the rows tighter. You may have to gather three rows at a time.
6. Even out the gathers so the pleats form straight vertical lines.
7. Use the gather guide piece to know how far to gather the fabric, according to the dress size you cut out.
8. Optional: Cut the gather guide piece from the knit fuse interfacing. Lightly press the knit fuse interfacing to the wrong side of the gathers, being careful to not fully crush the pleats.
9. With the serger pleating method, thread the machine with the decorative thread. Lay a piece of press-away stabilizer on top of the gathered pleats. Using a decorative satin stitch sew across every other row. Use a slow and even speed while stitching for best results. For this dress, we set the elongation on 2, stitch width 7.0, stitch length .2, and a pressure foot pressure on 2.



10. With the serger smocking method, you may choose to add additional decorative stitches between the rows of cover stitching or leave only the rows of cover stitching showing.
11. When attaching the mini piping cord to the bodice front, back, collar and sleeves, baste the piping to the pieces first using the standard zipper foot.
12. Then attach the invisible zipper foot to the machine.
13. Run the mini piping through one of the channels of the zipper foot. Your stitching will be tight and close to the piping leaving a professional result.

 A vertical purple advertisement banner. At the top, a hand is shown holding a needle and thread, with a decorative purple thread being used. Below the image, the text reads:

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14. Complete the remaining construction portion of the dress as directed by the pattern instruction guide sheet. Use the serger to finish off the seam allowances for a professional looking finish.

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