

Care of Bethel Robes

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Washing the Robe

- 1) Determine whether the robe is made of rayon or polyester satin. Rayon satin yellows with age and needs pressing after being washed. Polyester satin does not yellow and needs minimal pressing after being dried in a dryer.
- 2) You can also determine the fiber of the fabric using a burn test. Pull a single thread from the bottom of the robe. Place it on a surface that does not burn, such as a china or glass plate. Light a match and place it next to one end of the thread. Rayon will burn with a flame; polyester will melt. If you are uncertain of your results, pick up the remaining thread and touch the end you burned. You will be able to feel a small ball of melted polyester if the thread is polyester.
- 3) Wash the robe. Before washing, take down the hem. Treat any dirty hem lines with a good quality stain remover. Wash in cool to warm water.
- 4) If the robe is rayon satin, hang the robe on a hanger to dry naturally until it is slightly damp. Then press while damp. If the robe is polyester satin, dry in a dryer on a permanent-press dry cycle.
- 5) Press the robe on the wrong side of the fabric using a steam iron on a low setting (most irons have a label that shows you the setting for various kinds of fabric). If the robe is rayon, you can remove stubborn wrinkles by spraying the fabric with water to dampen the fabric again before ironing out the wrinkle. If the robe is polyester, prepare a mixture of one part white vinegar (or vodka) with three parts water. Using a spray bottle, spray this mixture on the wrinkles, smooth the fabric out, and allow to air dry. Then press again.

Attaching the Cord

- 1) Mark the center of the back of the yoke with a pin. For permanent marking, use a pale color of embroidery floss to mark the center of the by stitching an 8-inch length of embroidery floss through the inside lower edge of the yoke at the center back. Tie the ends of the floss with an overhand knot as close to the middle of the strand of floss as possible. Trim the ends of the floss to about 1" in length.
- 2) Mark the center of the front of the yoke with a pin. Measure 2" on either side of the center front and place a pin. Make a permanent marking as explained above if you wish.
- 3) Place the center of the cord at the center back marker. Stitch the cord at the bottom of the yoke. Stitch from the center back around the yoke until reaching the marker 2" from the center front. Repeat for the other half of the cord.

Marking the hem

- 1) Put the robe on the daughter. Be sure the shoulder seam is on top of the shoulder. Ask the daughter to tie the cord. If the robe yoke is not lying flat at the center front, the cord is too tight.
- 2) Have the daughter look straight ahead throughout the marking process.

- 3) With a short ruler, mark with a pin where the robe is 3" from the floor. Put pins in 6 places: at each side seam and 2 times spaced equally along the front and the back.
- 4) If you wish to hem the robe before applying the cord, mark the robe 2" from the floor. The tying of the cord will shorten the robe to approximately 3" from the floor.
- 5) Have the daughter take off the robe, being sure not to dislodge the 6 pins.

Turning the Hem

- 1) Turn the robe inside out and place it on an ironing board. Turn up the hem as marked by the 6 pins. Adjust as necessary to make a smooth hem. Stabilize the hem by pinning it parallel to the hem and close to the bottom of the robe.
- 2) Measure the length of the fabric turned up. The final hem of the robe must be 4 inches.
 - a. If the hem is shorter than 4", machine stitch white bias tape or gross grain ribbon to the end of the robe to lengthen the hem to 4". The width of the bias tape or ribbon varies according to how much you need to add to the hem to make it 4".
 - b. If the hem is longer than 4", turn the hem on itself as many times as you need to make the hem 4". You may need to remove the stabilizing pins from the bottom of the robe to do this.
- 3) Pin the hem in place, placing a pin about every 3-4 inches.
- 4) Hand stitch the hem in place, using a blind stitch, a running hem stitch, or a herringbone stitch and white thread. Use the blind stitch if the daughter is Chaplain and your Bethel uses heeled shoes. The running hem stitch is the easiest to learn and the fastest to sew. The herringbone stitch is worked left to right, if you are right-handed, and some people prefer this way of sewing.
- 5) If you do not know how to do these stitches, you can find tutorials on your phone or computer using Google or another search engine.
- 6) It is important that the thread you use to hem the robe is the same strength or weaker than the robe fabric. Otherwise, if the daughter catches the hem of the robe with her foot, the robe fabric will likely tear.
 - a. If the robe is made of rayon, use 100% cotton thread.
 - b. If the robe is made of polyester, use a cotton/polyester blend or 100% polyester thread.
- 7) You were probably taught in school or by your Mom to catch only 1-2 threads of the outer fabric when sewing a hem. Since Job's Daughters robes are used for many years, we do not want to weaken the fabric by making our stitches too small. Catch the outer fabric by about 1/16" to 1/8" as you hem.
- 8) Check with your Bethel to see if they want you to press the hem after being stitched. If you do, you will press in a sharp line that can be difficult to press out. Some Bethels do not press their hems to avoid this problem.