



THE TUNIC BIBLE

by Sarah Gunn and Julie Starr

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Hearing the word “tunic” may make readers think of ancient Rome. Yet over two thousand years later this piece of clothing is still a wardrobe mainstay. Because of its versatility, a tunic can be anything from a casual top for the beach to an elegant evening dress.

This book is aimed at home sewers and includes life-sized patterns in multiple sizes on sturdy paper with many design options. A striking photo gallery of stylish and fashionable tunics for every occasion will tempt even those sewers hesitant to make their own clothing. The beautiful color photographs show the many design options possible from the included patterns.

The basic pattern pieces include a bodice front, back, and sleeve, with a selection of plackets and collars. Because the pieces are interchangeable, this one set of patterns can produce totally different necklines, sleeve treatments, collars and tunic lengths. Suggestions are also given for embellishment with trim and stitching.

Although all of the fabrics used in creating the tunics in the book are commercial fabrics, most of the pattern pieces would be suitable for handwoven yardage. Many of the photographs show plackets with a contrasting fabric that’s repeated on the sleeve cuffs and hem bands. Using purchased material for these contrasting details would highlight any handwoven fabric used for the bodice front and back. Both of those pattern pieces are uncomplicated shapes that any weaver would find easy to work with. Because both the bodice front and back are cut on the fold without a center seam, narrow widths of handwoven yardage would need to be pieced with a center front and back seam.

The instructions for constructing a tunic are for the most part very detailed and clear, with step-by-step drawings for extra clarification. However, unlike the instructions in commercial patterns, these instructions are not sequential. There are separate sections, “Sewing Tutorials,” for various placket and sleeve options which then refer the reader back to the “General Assembly Order” to complete the rest of the garment. The authors state that “the book is ideal for all ranges of sewing skills, from basic to advanced.” Someone with basic sewing skills would probably appreciate more information on how to adjust the ease when inserting a sleeve. For experienced sewers, moving from one tutorial section to another in order to follow the proper tunic construction order will not be a problem. It might be for a less experienced sewer.

In addition to the colorful and stylish tunics created by the authors for this book, thirteen popular on-line sewist bloggers were asked to create their own interpretations of the tunic using the patterns in the *Tunic Bible*. Their imaginative results confirm how readily these four basic pattern pieces can be used to make a dramatic personal statement through fabric choice and by mixing design elements.

The authors Sarah Gunn and Julie Starr have both been passionate about inspiring women to sew their own clothing. With their strong understanding of and connection to home sewers the authors have provided a virtual toolbox to create fashionable and personalized garments. *The Tunic Bible* will definitely make you think about tunics in a new way and may even inspire you to sew one.

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