

PAULLA'S Patches

Gabriella Aldeman

Illustrated by
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To my daughter, Lucia. Your determination and
boundless creativity inspire me every day.

—G.A.



For you, little child full of curiosity and creativity,
may adversity never stop you, and may your ideas
make this world a kinder and better place. I can't
wait to see the future you create!

—R.A.M.





Rrrrip!

I froze at the sound
of my pants tearing.

“Uh-oh,” said George. “Can you get new ones, Paula?”
“Maybe,” I murmured. But I knew I would have to wait
for the next batch of hand-me-downs from my cousin.

"Shh, please don't tell," I pleaded.

I didn't want anyone else to notice the hole. My teacher would try to help and all the kids would laugh at me.

"I won't," promised George.



At my desk, I covered my leg with my right hand and tried writing with the left. The P's came out particularly wiggly.

"Is your hand all right, Paula?" asked Zoila.

"It just needs a rest."



I looked down and noticed the name on Zoila's backpack: "Penelope." I guess Zoila got hand-me-downs too.

A Note from the Author

My daughter's pants used to tear all the time. This resulted in big feelings—mostly from me. When I was a child, I got teased about my clothes and the way they fit.

One time, at a birthday party, my jeans got caught on the edge of a slide and tore as I went down. The hole was so big it exposed my bottom! I probably should have told a grown-up. Instead, I spent the rest of the party sitting down, pretending I had a tummy ache. I even missed out on singing happy birthday and eating cake. I wish I'd had a jacket to tie around my waist. More than anything, I wish I had realized that it was okay. And not my fault.

If you've ever felt like Paula or me because your clothes are torn or old, or don't fit quite right, please know you are not alone.

Remember how Zoila asks Paula if her hand is all right? And Libby asks Paula whether she needs space for her lunch tray? If you spot a classmate feeling low, ask them if they are okay. They might not always tell you the whole story. But your kindness may be the encouragement they need to feel better or come up with their own creative solution.

Paula's solution to her worries is to make colorful patches for her friends and for herself. You too can create patches like Paula's—or come up with new designs of your own. On this page and the next are some ideas for you to try. Use your imagination, and have fun!

Fun with Fabric

Paula's Patches

Use fabric to make patches like Paula's.

What you need

- * scissors
- * scrap of fabric
- * glue or clear nail polish
- * embroidery thread (optional)
- * safety pins



What you do

1. Cut out any shape from a piece of fabric.
2. Apply a layer of glue or nail polish around the edges to prevent fraying. Let it dry.
3. Optional: If you wish, use embroidery thread to make decorative stitches around the edge of the patch.
4. Add a safety pin or two and pin your patch to decorate a jacket or bag. Or ask an adult to sew your creation to cover a tear or stain.



Paula's Bookmarks

Make your own bookmark with leftover fabric scraps. Happy reading!

What you need

- * thin cardboard (such as from a cereal box)
- * glue
- * scraps of fabric
- * scissors



What you do

1. Draw a rectangle on the cardboard and cut it out.
2. Spread a thin layer of glue over one side of the cardboard.
3. Place your fabric (one or more pieces) over the side covered in glue. Let it dry.
4. Use scissors to trim off any excess fabric.
5. Repeat steps 2 to 4 on the other side of the cardboard.

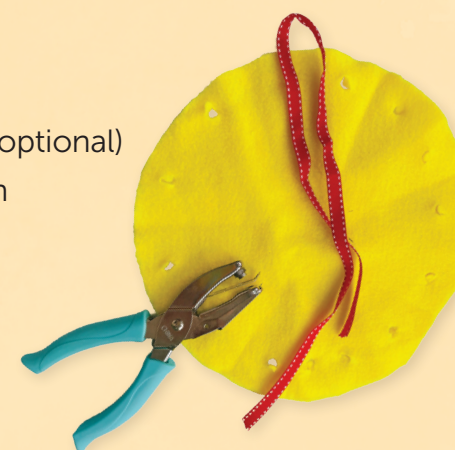


Paula's Pouches

Did you know you can make a drawstring pouch with fabric and string? No sewing required! You can use it to store your favorite treasures.

What you need

- * round object, such as a plate
- * pen or marker
- * 12" x 12" fabric
- * scissors
- * hole puncher (optional)
- * string or ribbon



What you do

1. Use a plate or other flat, round object to trace a large circle on the fabric.
2. Cut out your circle of fabric.
3. Use scissors or a hole puncher to snip evenly spaced small holes around the circle of fabric, about 1 or 2 inches from the edge.
4. Thread your string or ribbon in and out through the holes.
5. Pull the string tight. You have a pouch!

