

Preliminary notes about fabric selection: To make our Color Wheel stars sparkle, all backgrounds for the 12 blocks are black. Each month's block emphasizes a different color, with a black background. Some blocks also use other colors, in addition to the main color. When choosing your fabrics (including the black for the backgrounds), you may use solids, or prints that read as solids (for example Moda Marbles, or color-on-color prints like a red-on-red or green-on-green). Don't worry about trying to get the exact same shade or tone that others are using - the variety will add interest to the finished quilt. (For example, the June block uses Red-Orange fabric. We will have different ideas about what constitutes the color Red-Orange.)

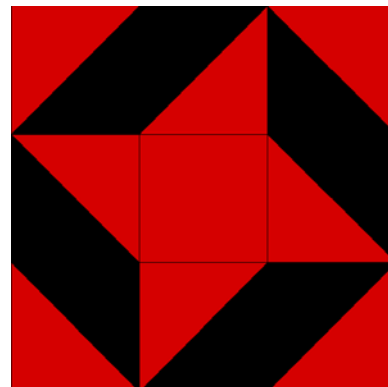
May 2015 - Red - Ribbon Star
Finished Size: 6" square
Skill Building - Half-Square Triangles

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Red and Black
(Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

Black - Four 2-7/8" (3-1/8") squares (see note below)

Red - Four 2-7/8" (3-1/8") squares (see note below)
One 2-1/2" square



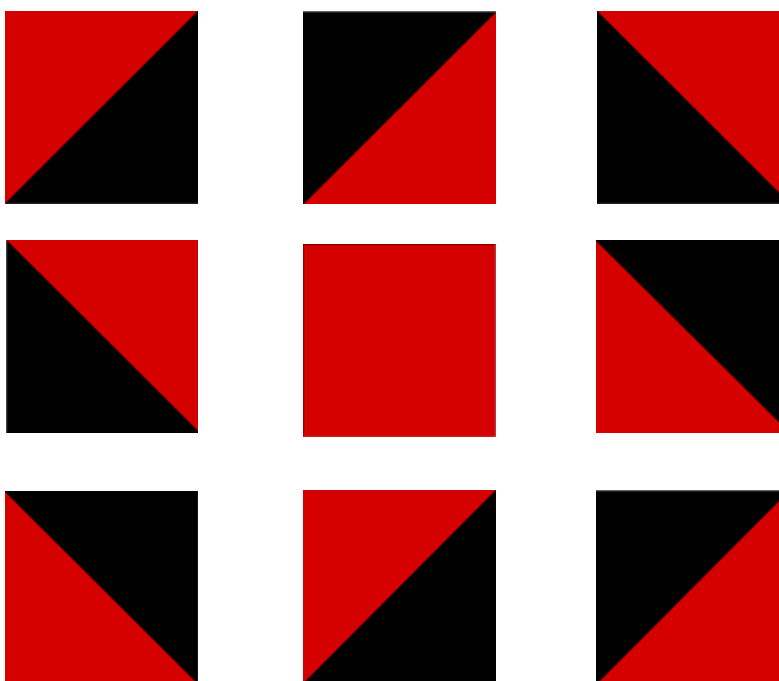
Note: I like to cut my squares for the pieced triangle units over-sized, and then trim the units to size after they are sewn. This allows for slight variations in piecing. The numbers in parentheses are for this over-sized cutting.

Piecing Instructions:

Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner on the backs of the four Red 2-7/8" squares.

Place a Red 2-7/8" square on top of a Black 2-7/8" square, right sides together. Sew a scant 1/4" from each side of the drawn line; then cut on the drawn line. Press toward the Black. Repeat with the other three sets of 2-7/8" squares. Square units up to 2-1/2" (with diagonal seam running from corner to corner).

Arrange your block as shown below, and stitch together in rows. Press seams on the top and bottom rows toward the outside, and seams in the middle row toward the center plain square. This will allow your seams to "nest" together as you join the rows.



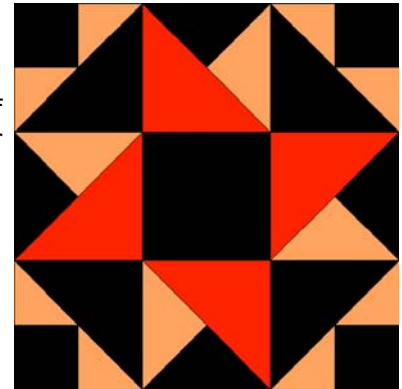
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June 2015 - Red-Orange - Spinning Star
Finished Size: 12" square
Skill Building - working with different-size triangle units

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Red-Orange and Black; 1/3 yd. of Orange (remaining Orange will be used for next month's block). (Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

- Black - Eight 2-1/2" squares
 One 4-1/2" square
 Four 2-7/8" (3-1/8") squares (see note below)
 One 5-1/4" (5-1/2") square, sub-cut twice diagonally
 (see note below)
- Red-Orange - Two 4-7/8" (5-1/8") squares, sub-cut once diagonally (see note below)
- Orange - Four 2-7/8" (3-1/8") squares (see note below)
 One 5-1/4" (5-1/2") square, sub-cut twice diagonally (see note below)



Note: I like to cut my squares for the pieced triangle units over-sized, and then trim the units to size after they are sewn. This allows for slight variations in piecing. The numbers in parentheses are for this over-sized cutting.

Piecing Instructions:

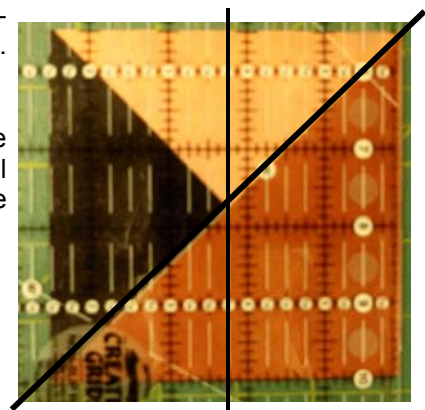
Half-Square Triangles: Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner on the backs of the four Orange 2-7/8" squares. Place an Orange 2-7/8" square on top of a Black 2-7/8" square, right sides together. Sew a scant 1/4" from each side of the drawn line; then cut on the drawn line. Press toward the black. Repeat with the other three sets of 2-7/8" squares. Square up to 2-1/2" square (with diagonal seam running from corner to corner).

Quarter-Square Units: These units use the four triangles sub-cut from the 5-1/4" (5-1/2") squares of Black and Orange. Place one Black triangle on top of one Orange triangle (right sides together). With the Black triangle on top, sew down one short side, from the right angle to the point, as shown at right. Press toward the Black - you should have a unit that looks like this:



Place one Quarter-Square unit right-sides-together with one of the Red-Orange triangles. Stitch down the long side (taking care with the bias edges). Trim to 4-1/2" square, measuring out from the center to trim each side.

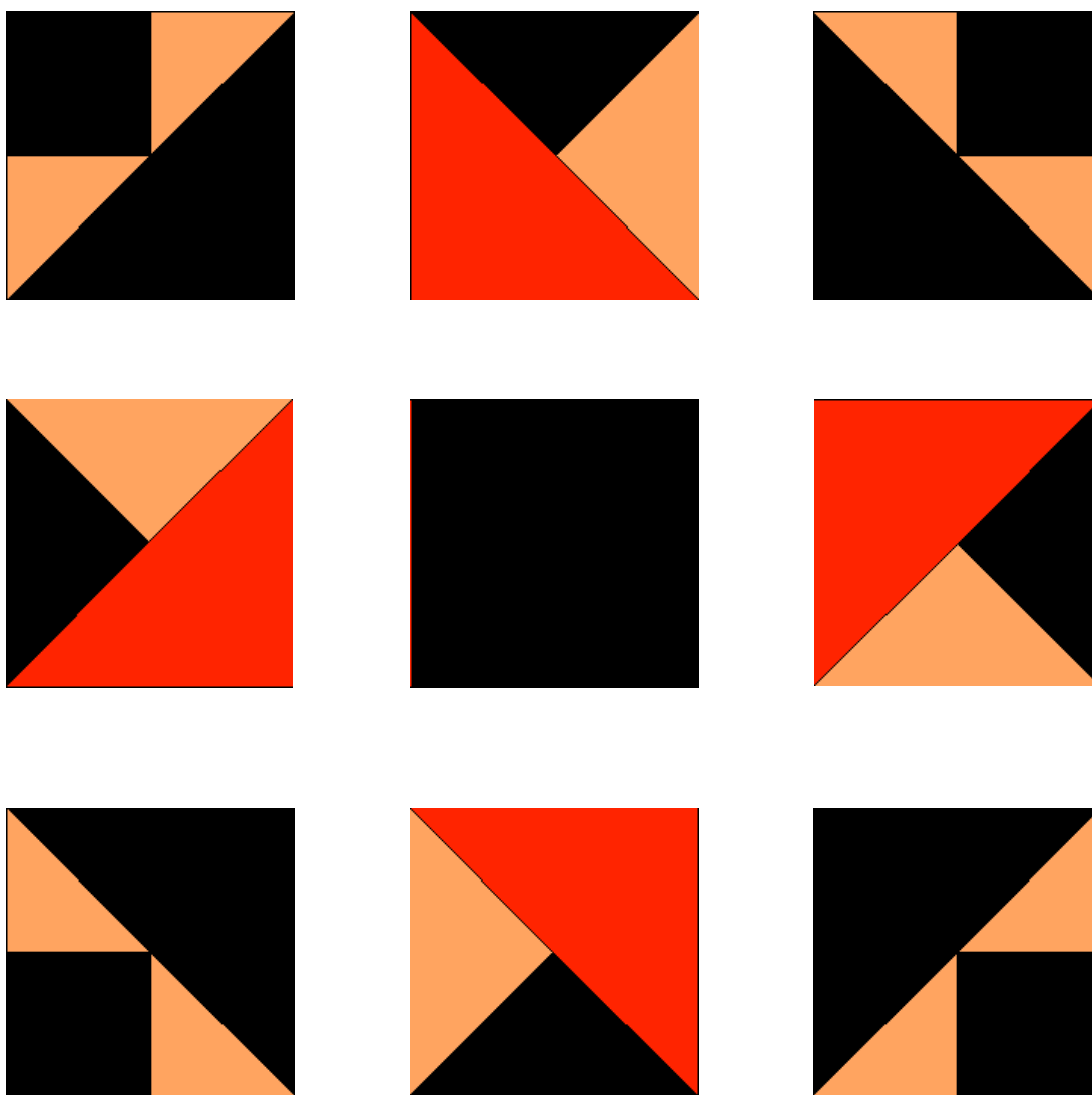
Trimming tip: Find the place on your ruler where the 45-degree-angle line meets the 2-1/4" line. Line up the 45-degree-angle line with the long diagonal line in the center of the unit, with the 2-1/4" intersection at the place where the Black and Orange fabrics meet the Red-Orange fabric.



Assemble the corner units as shown below, using the 2-1/2" Black squares and the Half-Square-Triangle units. Press seams toward the solid Black squares. (All four corner units are identical; they are just rotated around the block.)



Arrange your block as shown below, and stitch together in rows. Press seams on the top and bottom rows toward the outside, and seams in the middle row toward the center plain square. This will allow your seams to “nest” together as you join the rows.



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July 2015 - Orange - Ohio Star
Finished Size: 9" square
Skill Building - Quarter-Square Triangles



Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Orange and Black. (Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Black - | Four 3-1/2" squares
Two 4-1/4" (4-1/2") squares (see note below) |
| Orange - | One 3-1/2" square
Two 4-1/4" (4-1/2") squares (see note below) |

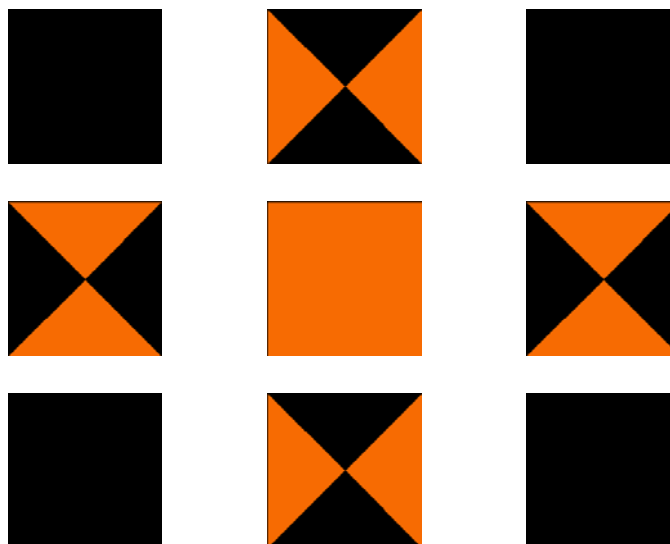
Note: I like to cut my squares for the Quarter-Square Triangle units over-sized by 1/2", and then trim the units to size after they are sewn. This allows for slight variations in cutting and piecing. The numbers in parentheses are for this over-sized cutting.

Piecing Instructions:

Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner on the backs of the two Orange 4-1/2" squares.

Place an Orange 4-1/2" square on top of a Black 4-1/2" square, right sides together. Sew a scant 1/4" from each side of the drawn line; then cut on the drawn line. Press toward the Black. Repeat with the other set of 4-1/2" squares. You now have four Half-Square Triangle units. On the backs of two of these units, draw a diagonal line from corner to corner, crossing perpendicular to the seam line. In other words, the drawn line bisects the seam line, forming an "X" with the seam line. Place one of these marked Half-Square Triangle units right-sides-together with an unmarked Half-Square Triangle unit, with the fabric colors opposite each other (i.e., Orange to Black, and Black to Orange). The seams will nest up against one another nicely. Sew a scant 1/4" from each side of the drawn line; then cut on the drawn line. Press this seam open. Square up to 3-1/2".

Arrange your block as shown below, and stitch together in rows. Press seams on the top and bottom rows toward the outside Black squares, and seams in the middle row toward the center Orange square. This will allow your seams to "nest" together as you join the rows.



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August 2015 - Yellow-Orange - Five-Pointed Star
Finished Size: 9" square
Skill Building - Fusible Applique

Fabric Requirements:

1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Yellow-Orange and Black
(Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)
Fusible web approx. 6" x 11"

Cutting Instructions:

Black - One 9-3/4" square

Yellow-Orange - One 4-1/2" square
One 6" square

Fusible Web - One 4-1/2" square
One 6" square



Instructions:

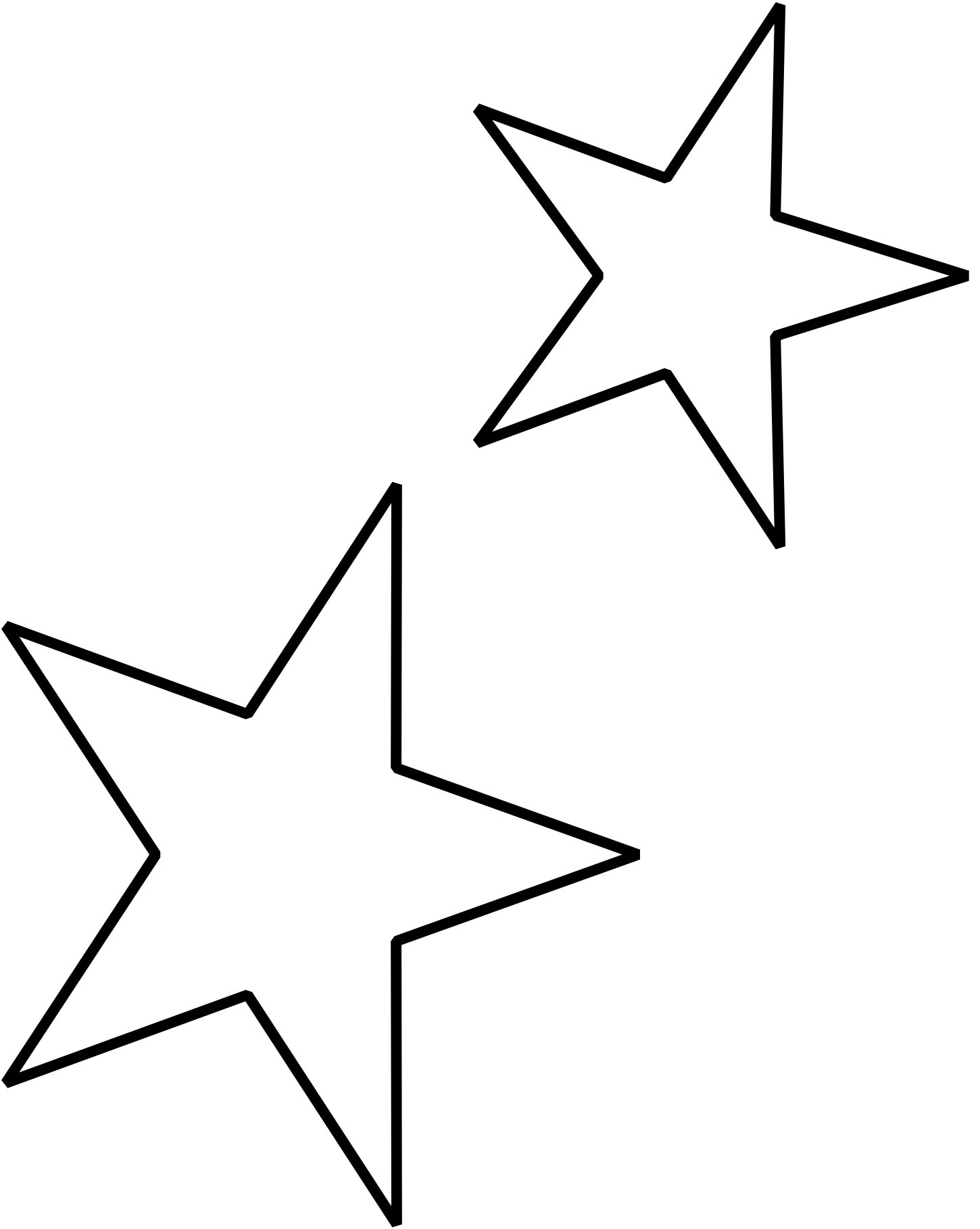
Option 1: Trace the large star design on the wrong side of the 6" Yellow-Orange square, and the small star design on the wrong side of the 4-1/2" Yellow-Orange square. Option 2: If your fusible web is backed with paper, you can trace the designs onto the paper side of the fusible web. Either way, use a ruler so you get nice, straight lines and sharp star points. (**Note:** Whenever you use an asymmetrical image, such as an animal or house shape, you must reverse the image when you trace onto the back of your fabric or fusible web, in order to have the image facing the correct direction when you fuse it to the background. Here, the star image is symmetrical, so there is no need to reverse the image.)

Before cutting, fuse the web to the wrong side of the Yellow-Orange squares (the side with the traced star), using the instructions given with your brand of fusible web. **Tip:** I like to use a non-stick material, like the Applique Pressing Sheet from Bear Threads Designs, to protect my ironing board and iron. Parchment paper (yep, the kind you use to line a cookie sheet or baking pan) also works well.

Cut out the two stars exactly on the drawn lines. Arrange the stars on the 9-3/4" black square any way you like; they don't have to be arranged like they're shown above. **Important:** When positioning your stars, be sure to leave a 1/2" seam allowance all the way around the outside of the block. Fuse the stars to the background, again following the instructions given with your brand of fusible web.

To finish the edges of the stars, you have a few options. You may finish with blanket stitch by hand or machine, using either Black or Yellow-Orange thread, depending on the look you want. To learn blanket stitch by hand, there are dozens (at least) of instructional videos and tutorials available online. A couple of good ones that I found are www.projectsbyjane.blogspot.com/2014/06/hand-applique-using-blanket-stitch.html (text and photographs), and this video by Connecting Threads: <https://youtu.be/BNK6ebZMxkM>.

Another alternative is to finish by machine with a narrow zigzag stitch, using monofilament thread. This is my preferred method for machine applique. I use MonoPoly, a 100% polyester thread from Superior Threads, in both the top and the bobbin. **Tip:** When winding a bobbin with monofilament thread, wind on the slowest speed, and only fill the bobbin 1/3 to 1/2 full. Before stitching, reduce your machine's top tension considerably. Try the stitch on scrap fabrics first, to be sure you have good tension. **After finishing the star edges, trim the block to 9-1/2" square.**



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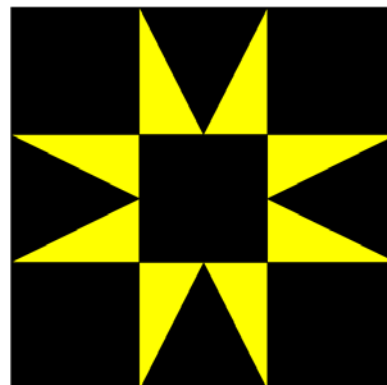
September 2015 - Yellow - Eight-Pointed Star
Finished Size: 6" square
Skill Building - Using Templates

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Yellow and Black
 (Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

Black - 5 of template A (2½" squares)
 4 of template B

Yellow - 4 of template C
 4 of template D

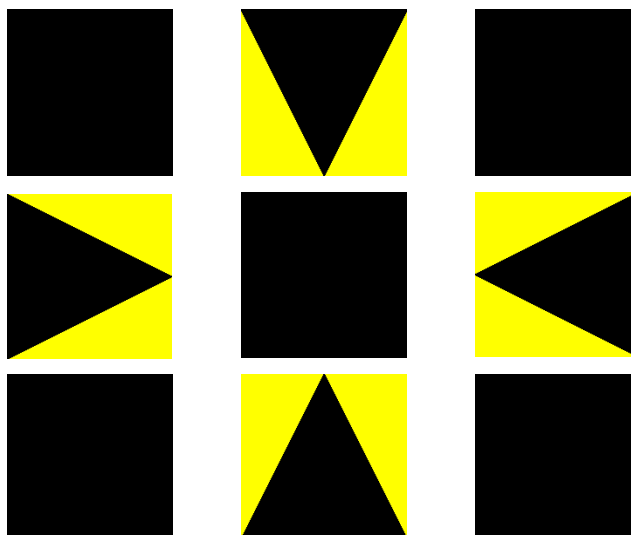


Using Templates: Print the sheet of templates, being sure to select "Actual Size" in the Print Options in Acrobat or Adobe Reader. You may either print four copies, using each template only once, or re-use the templates. Another method is to use a ruler and trace the templates onto special template plastic available at most quilt shops. This provides semi-permanent templates that can be reused almost indefinitely (unless you cut into them, which isn't that hard to do - ask me how I know!). If using paper templates, I recommend pinning the template to your fabric using a flat-headed pin. Cut along the dotted lines, using a ruler and rotary cutter to get nice, straight edges. Be sure you cut the little corners off as shown on the template - this will make matching the pieces easier.

Piecing Instructions:

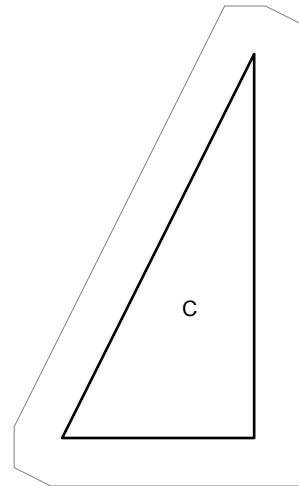
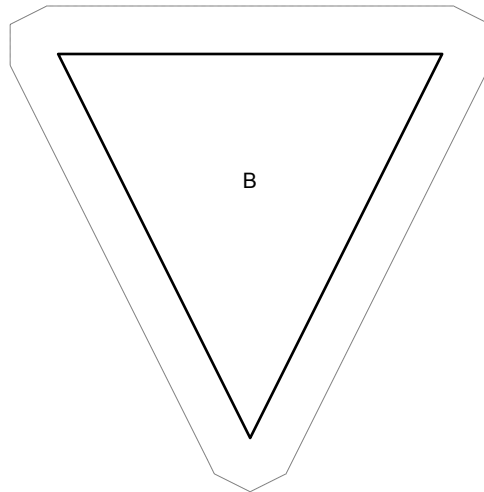
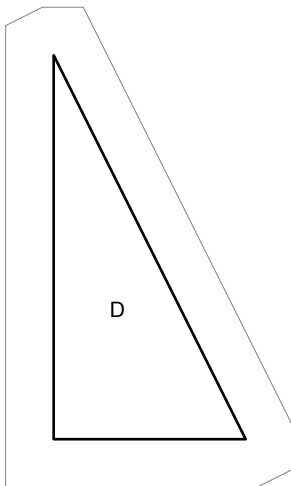
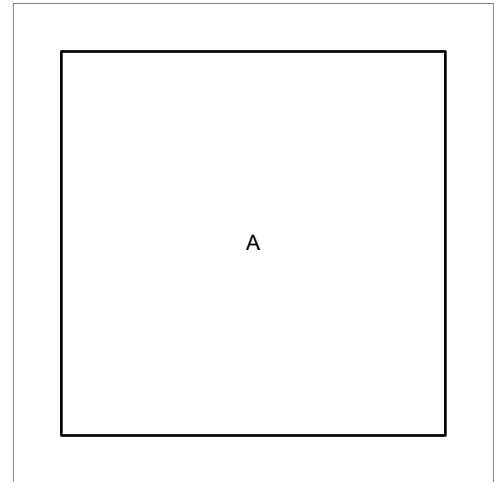
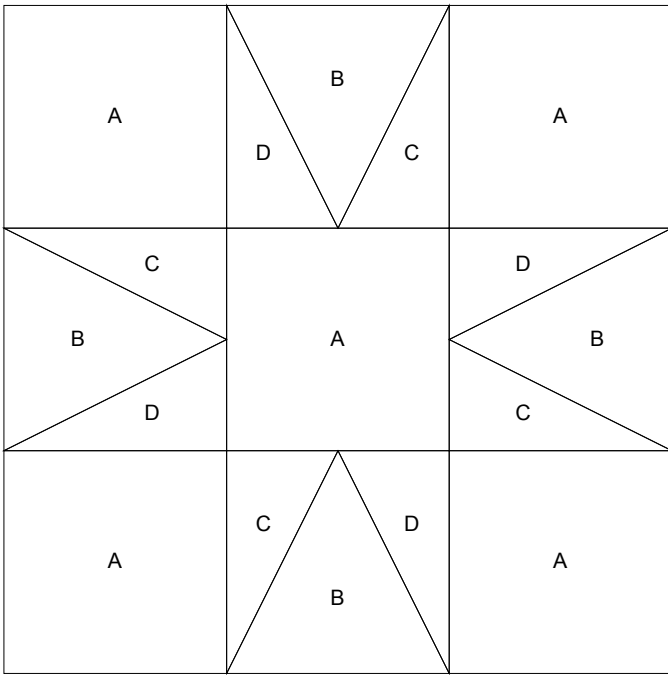
You will make four identical units. Begin by laying a B piece face up, with the short edge of the triangle at the bottom. Lay a C piece face up next to the left side of the B piece, with the right-angle corner of the C piece at the top left. Flip the C piece over onto the B piece, right sides together, and match the edge at the left side. Be careful not to stretch the bias edges. Sew down that diagonal side using a scant 1/4" seam allowance, and then press the seam toward the C piece. Next, lay a D piece on the right-hand side of the B piece, with the right-angle corner of the D piece at the top right. Flip and sew as before, and press toward the D piece. Make three more identical units.

Arrange your block as shown below, taking care to turn the black triangle points toward the center. Stitch together in rows, pressing seams on the top and bottom rows toward the outside, and seams in the middle row toward the center plain square. This will allow your seams to "nest" together as you join the rows.



Eight-Pointed Star

Key Block (29/50 actual size)



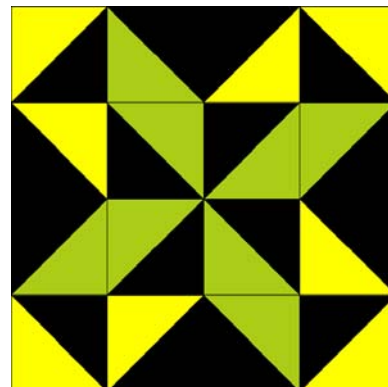
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October 2015 - Yellow-Green - Pinwheel Star
Finished Size: 12" square
Skill Building - Flying Geese

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Yellow-Green and Black;
 leftover Yellow from September block.
 (Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

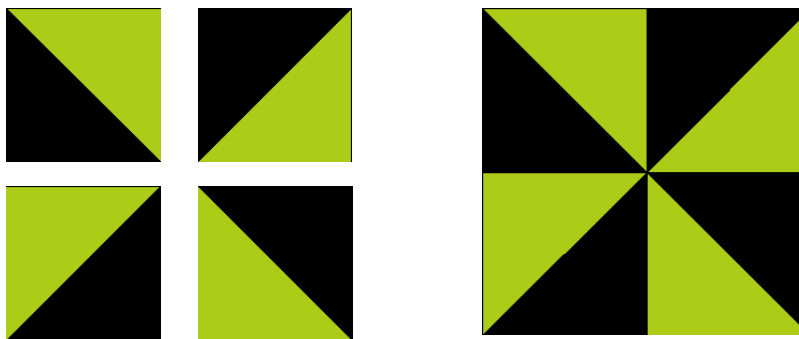
- Black - Four 3-7/8" (4-1/8") squares (see note below)
 Four 6-1/2" x 3-1/2" rectangles
- Yellow-Green - Two 3-7/8" (4-1/8") squares (see note below)
 Four 3-1/2" squares
- Yellow - Two 3-7/8" (4-1/8") squares (see note below)
 Four 3-1/2" squares



Note: I like to cut my squares for the half-square triangle units over-sized, and then trim the units to size after they are sewn. This allows for slight variations in piecing. The numbers in parentheses are for this over-sized cutting.

Piecing Instructions:

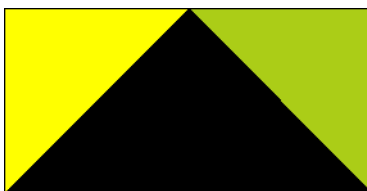
Half-Square Triangle Units: Using the 3-7/8" (4-1/8") squares, make four half-square triangles using Yellow and Black, and four using Yellow-Green and Black. Instructions for half-square triangles are given on the May and June blocks. Press seams toward the Black. Square units up to 3-1/2". Sew the Green-and-Black units together as shown below, pressing all seams open. Take care with fabric placement so the pinwheel is rotating in the correct direction. The pinwheel unit should measure 6-1/2" square.



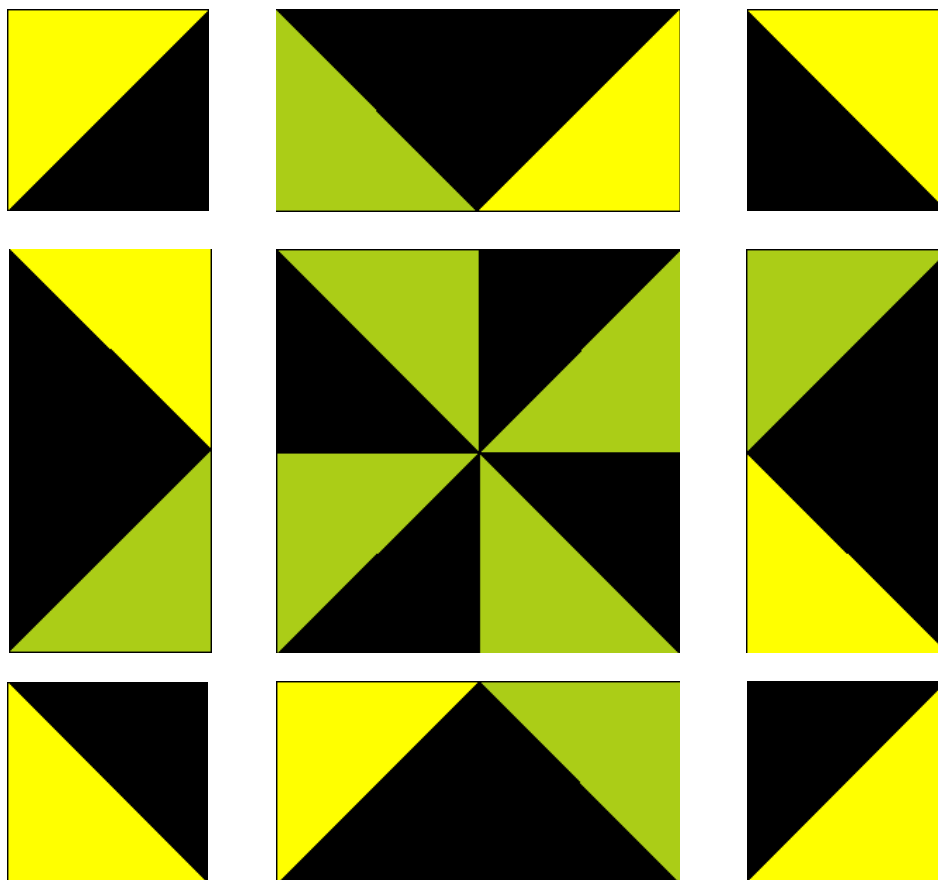
Flying Geese Units: Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner on the back of the Yellow and the Yellow-Green 3-1/2" squares. Place a 6-1/2" x 3-1/2" rectangle in front of you, right side up. On the left end, line up a Yellow 3-1/2" square, right side down, with the drawn diagonal line running from the lower left corner to the upper center of the rectangle. Sew on the drawn line. (**Tip:** I like to start sewing at the center of the unit, rather than the corner, to prevent the corner from bending and getting caught in the machine's feed dogs.) Before trimming, flip the lower half of the Yellow triangle up toward the corner to check placement. The edges of the triangle should line up with the edges of the Black rectangle. If placement is correct, flip the triangle back down flat. Align the 1/4" line of your ruler

along the stitching line, and trim. (**Take care** not to trim on the wrong side of the stitching line! You are trimming off two triangles, not the larger piece of the black rectangle.) Press toward the Yellow triangle.

Place the rectangle in front of you with the Yellow triangle on the left end. Place a Yellow-Green 3-1/2" square on the right end of the rectangle, right sides together, with the drawn line running from the lower right corner to the upper center of the rectangle. The drawn line should intersect the top corner of the Yellow triangle at the center of the rectangle. Sew on the drawn line, check placement, and trim. Press toward the Yellow-Green triangle. Repeat these steps three more times. You should end up with four identical 3-1/2" x 6-1/2" units that look like this:



Arrange your block as shown below, and stitch together in rows. Press seams on the top and bottom rows toward the outside, and seams in the middle row toward the center pinwheel. This will allow your seams to “nest” together as you join the rows. Press top and bottom rows toward the center pinwheel.



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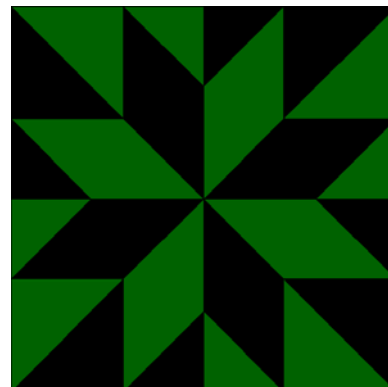
November 2015 - Green - Split LeMoyne Star
Finished Size: 6" square
Skill Building - Paper Piecing

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Green and Black
(Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

Black - Two 3" squares, cut once on the diagonal
(for pieces B1, D1, F1, & H1)
Four 2" x 3-3/4" rectangles
(for pieces A2, C2, E2, & G2)
Two 2-3/4" squares, cut once on the diagonal
(for pieces B3, D3, F3 & H3)

Green - Two 3" squares, cut once on the diagonal
(for pieces A1, C1, E1, & G1)
Four 2" x 3-3/4" rectangles
(for pieces B2, D2, F2, & H2)
Two 2-3/4" squares, cut once on the diagonal
(for pieces A3, C3, E3 & G3)



Instructions:

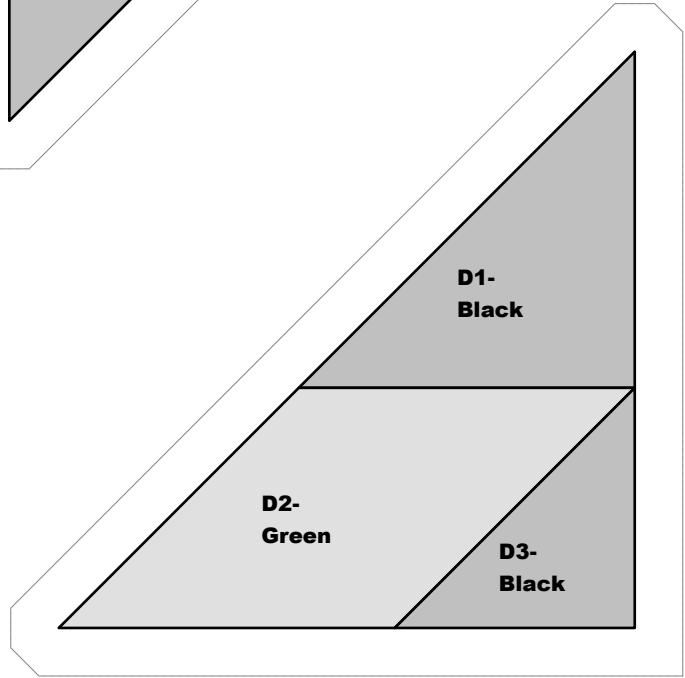
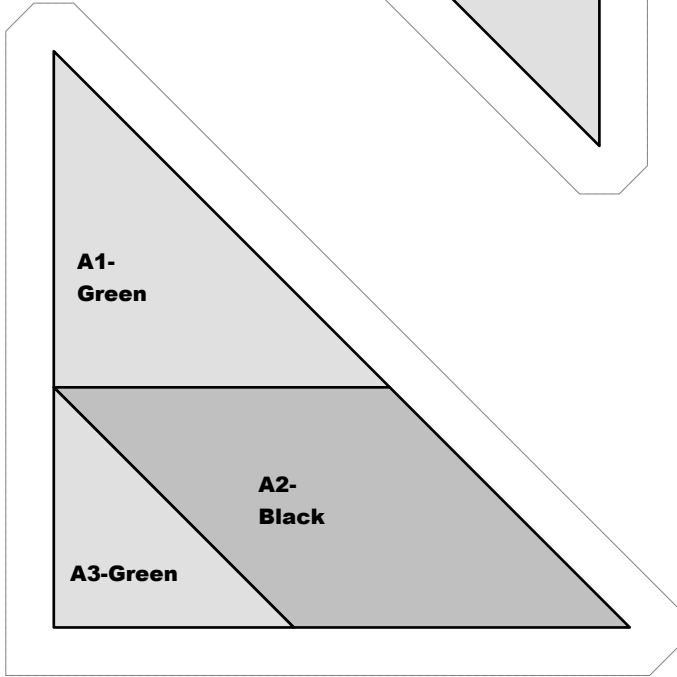
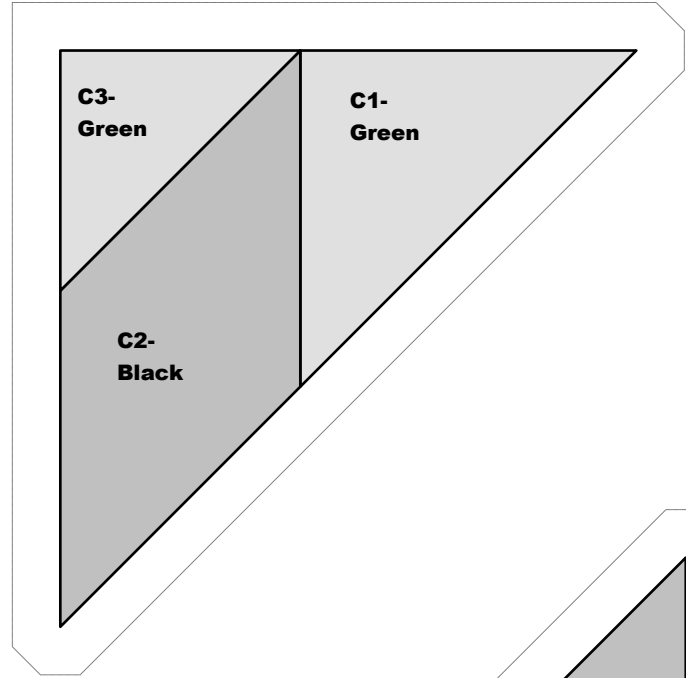
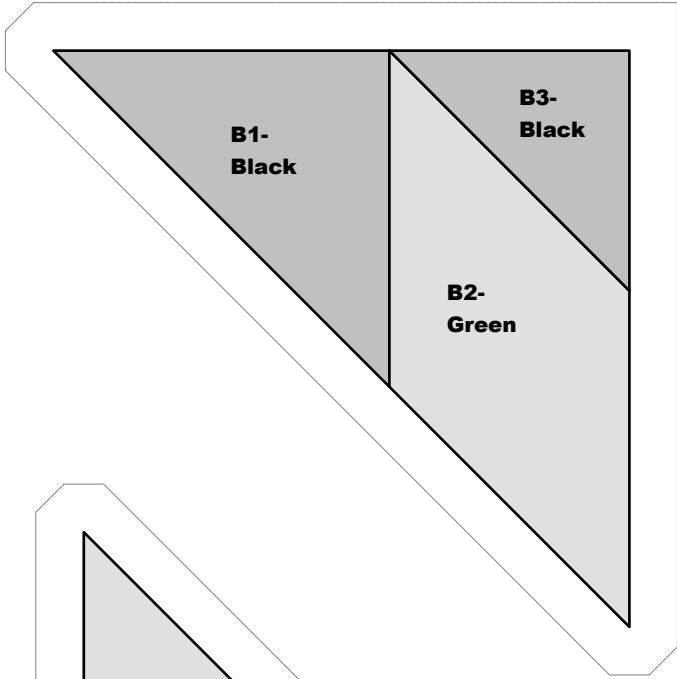
This month's block is paper pieced. The cutting instructions above will give you correctly-sized pieces for each of the sections. If you missed the paper piecing demonstration at the November meeting, and you are not familiar with paper piecing, I recommend you watch this video to learn the technique: <https://youtu.be/Xv2gKMx9CCM>. There are many videos online, but this one shows the "postcard technique," which works the best for me.

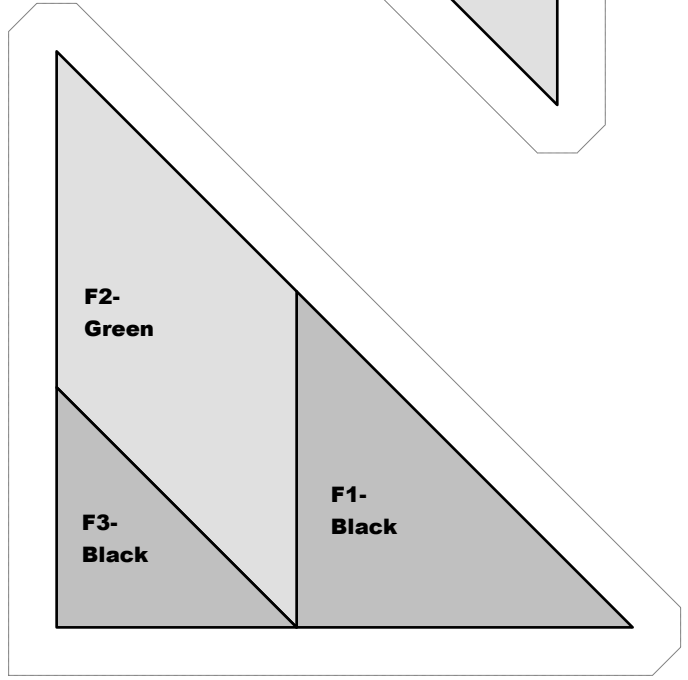
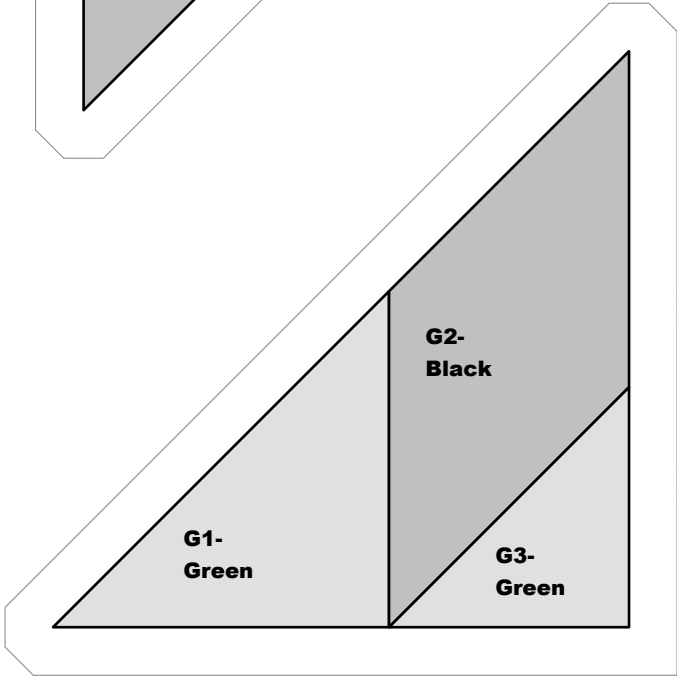
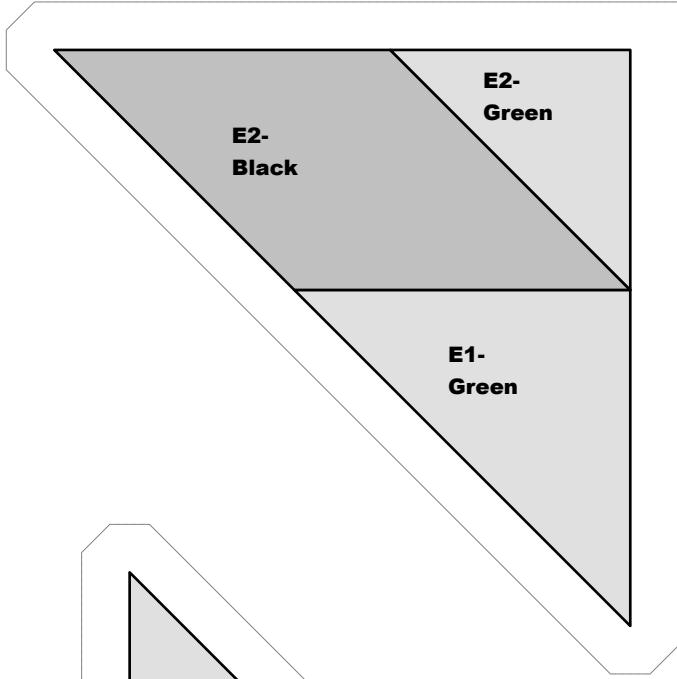
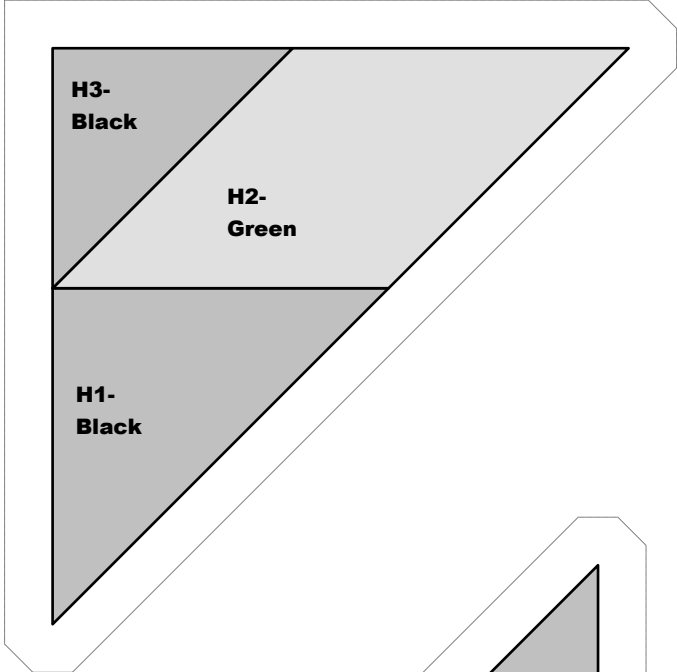
You can use regular typing paper or special paper-piecing paper to print off the patterns. Personally, I've found the specialty papers only slightly easier to remove.) Shorten your stitch length (I use 1.5mm).

Paper piece sections A through H; then join section A to section B, as shown below. Use pins to match seam allowances, intersections, and corners precisely. Press center seam toward the Green diamond.



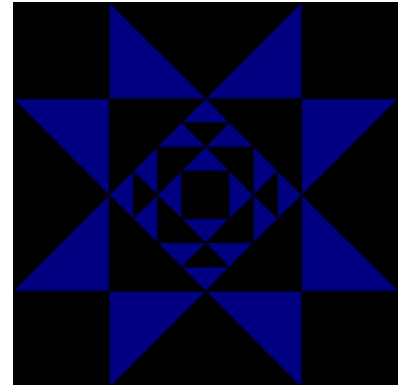
Join sections C and D, E and F, and G and H, to make the other three quarters of the block. Next join the two top quarters (the A/B and C/D units), and the two bottom quarters (the E/F and G/H units). I recommend pressing these seams open to reduce bulk at the center join. (I remove the paper from the seam allowances before pressing the seams open.) Finally, join the top and bottom halves together, and remove the paper to complete the block.





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December 2015 - Blue - Midnight Star
Finished Size: 12" square
Skill Building - Square-in-a-Square



Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Blue and Black
(Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

Black - Four 3-1/2" squares
Four 6-1/2" x 3-1/2" rectangles
Two 3-7/8" squares, cut once on the diagonal
Four 2-5/8" x 1-1/2" rectangles
Two 1-7/8 (2-1/8") squares
One 2" square

Blue - Two 1-7/8 (2-1/8") squares
Eight 1-1/2" squares
Eight 3-1/2" squares
One 2-3/4" square, cut twice on the diagonal
(cutting an X from corner to corner, each way - making four triangular pieces)

Note: I like to cut my squares for the half-square triangle units over-sized, and then trim the units to size after they are sewn. This allows for slight variations in piecing. The numbers in parentheses are for this over-sized cutting.

Piecing Instructions:

Half-Square Triangle Units: Using the 1-7/8" (2-1/8") Blue and Black squares, make four half-square triangles. Instructions for half-square triangles are given in the May and June blocks. Press seams toward the Black. Square units up to 1-1/2".

Flying Geese Units: Draw a diagonal line from corner to corner on the back of the eight Blue 1-1/2" squares, and the eight Blue 3-1/2" squares. Set the 3-1/2" squares aside. Place a 2-5/8" x 1-1/2" rectangle in front of you, right side up. On the left end, line up a Blue 1-1/2" square, right side down, with the drawn diagonal line running from the lower left corner to the upper center of the rectangle. Sew on the drawn line. (**Tip:** I like to start sewing at the center of the unit, rather than the corner, to prevent the corner from bending and getting caught in the machine's feed dogs.) Before trimming, flip the lower half of the Blue triangle up toward the corner to check placement. The edges of the triangle should line up with the edges of the Black rectangle. If placement is correct, flip the triangle back down flat. Align the 1/4" line of your ruler just inside the stitching line, and trim a scant 1/4" from the stitching line. (**Take care** not to trim on the wrong side of the stitching line! You are trimming off two triangles, not the larger piece of the black rectangle.) Press toward the Blue triangle. Repeat these steps, placing a Blue 1-1/2" square on the right side of the Black rectangle, with the drawn line intersecting the first Blue triangle, and running from the center to the lower right of the Black rectangle. Make four of these units.

Repeat these same steps using the Blue 3-1/2" squares, and the Black 6-1/2" x 3-1/2" rectangles, again making four units.

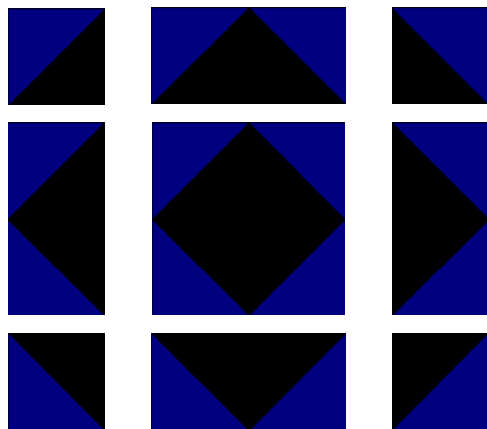
Square-in-a-Square Center:

Take each of the four small Blue triangles you cut from the Blue 2-3/4" square, and press the triangle in half lightly, so you can identify the center of the long side. (Alternatively, you can measure and mark the center of the long side

on each of the triangles.) Take the Black 2" square, and mark the center of each side. Match the center of the long side of one Blue triangle to the center of one side of the Black square, right sides together. Stitch with a scant 1/4" seam. Press toward the Blue triangle. Repeat the process on the opposite side of the square, pressing toward the triangle. Check to see that the points of the two triangles line up exactly opposite one another. Then use your rotary cutter to trim the triangle corners even with the two straight sides of the Black square. Stitch the remaining two Blue triangles to the other sides of the Black square, pressing toward the triangles. Square the unit up to 2-5/8".

Assembling the Center Section:

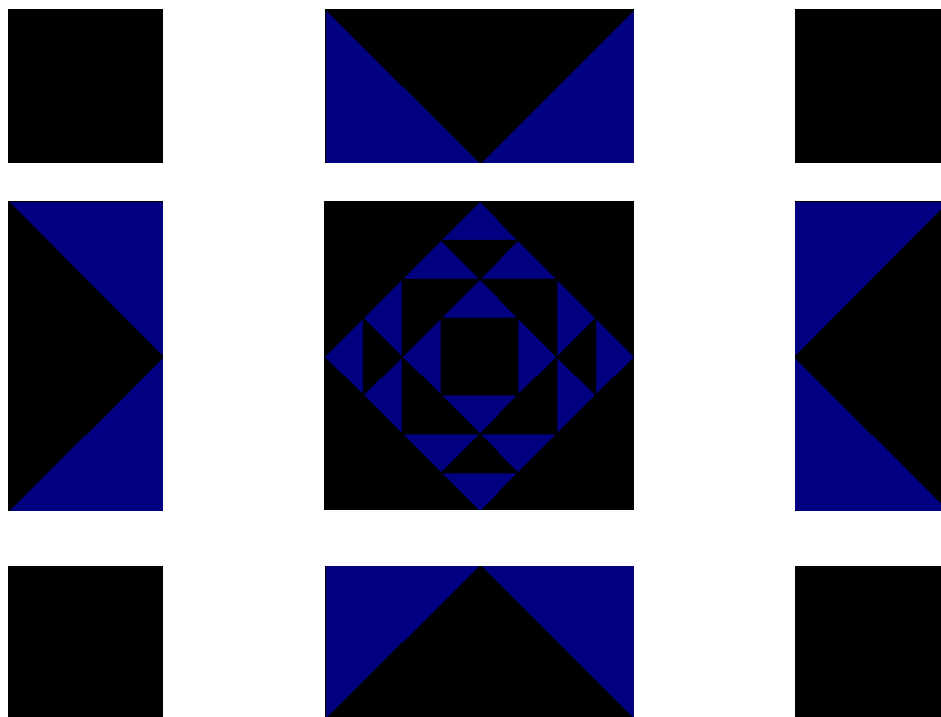
Using the four 1-1/2" half-square triangles, the four 2-5/8" x 1-1/2" Flying Geese units, and the Square-in-a-Square unit, arrange the center section as shown below, and stitch together in rows. Press seams in the top and bottom rows toward the center (toward the Flying Geese units), and in the center row toward the outside. This will allow your seams to "nest" together as you join the rows. Press both seams joining the rows toward the outside, away from the center Square-in-a-Square section.



Next, mark (either by pressing or measuring) the centers of the long sides of the Black triangles you cut from the 3-7/8" squares. Also mark the centers of each side of the Center Section unit (which should be where the tips of the black triangles meet the edges). Use the same method you used to construct the small Square-in-a-Square unit to add a triangle to each side of the Center Section. Square the entire center of the block up to 6-1/2".

Assembling the Block:

Arrange your block as shown below, and stitch together in rows. Press seams on the top and bottom rows toward the inside, and seams in the middle row toward the outside. Join rows, pressing both seams away from the center.



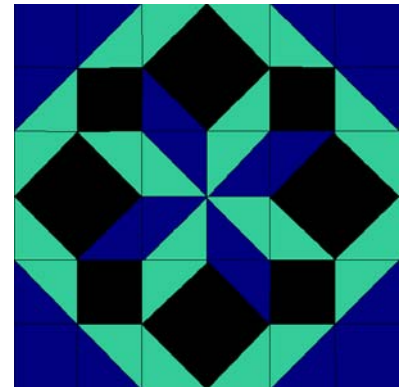
Preliminary notes about fabric selection: To make our Color Wheel stars sparkle, all backgrounds for the 12 blocks are black. Each month's block emphasizes a different color, with a black background. Some blocks also use other colors, in addition to the main color. When choosing your fabrics (including the black for the backgrounds), you may use solids, or prints that read as solids (for example Moda Marbles, or color-on-color prints like a red-on-red or green-on-green). Don't worry about trying to get the exact same shade or tone that others are using - the variety will add interest to the finished quilt. (For example, the June block uses Red-Orange fabric. We will have different ideas about what constitutes the color Red-Orange.)

January 2016 - Blue-Green - Tumbling Star
Finished Size: 9" square
Skill Building - Using Triangle Papers

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Blue-Green and Black, and leftover Blue from December (Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

- Black - One 5-1/4" x 7-1/2" rectangle
 One 5-1/4" x 2-3/4" rectangle
 Four 2" squares
- Blue - One 5-1/4" x 7-1/2" rectangle
 One 5-1/4" x 2-3/4" rectangle
 Four 2" squares
- Blue-Green - Two 5-1/4" x 7-1/2" rectangles



Piecing Instructions:

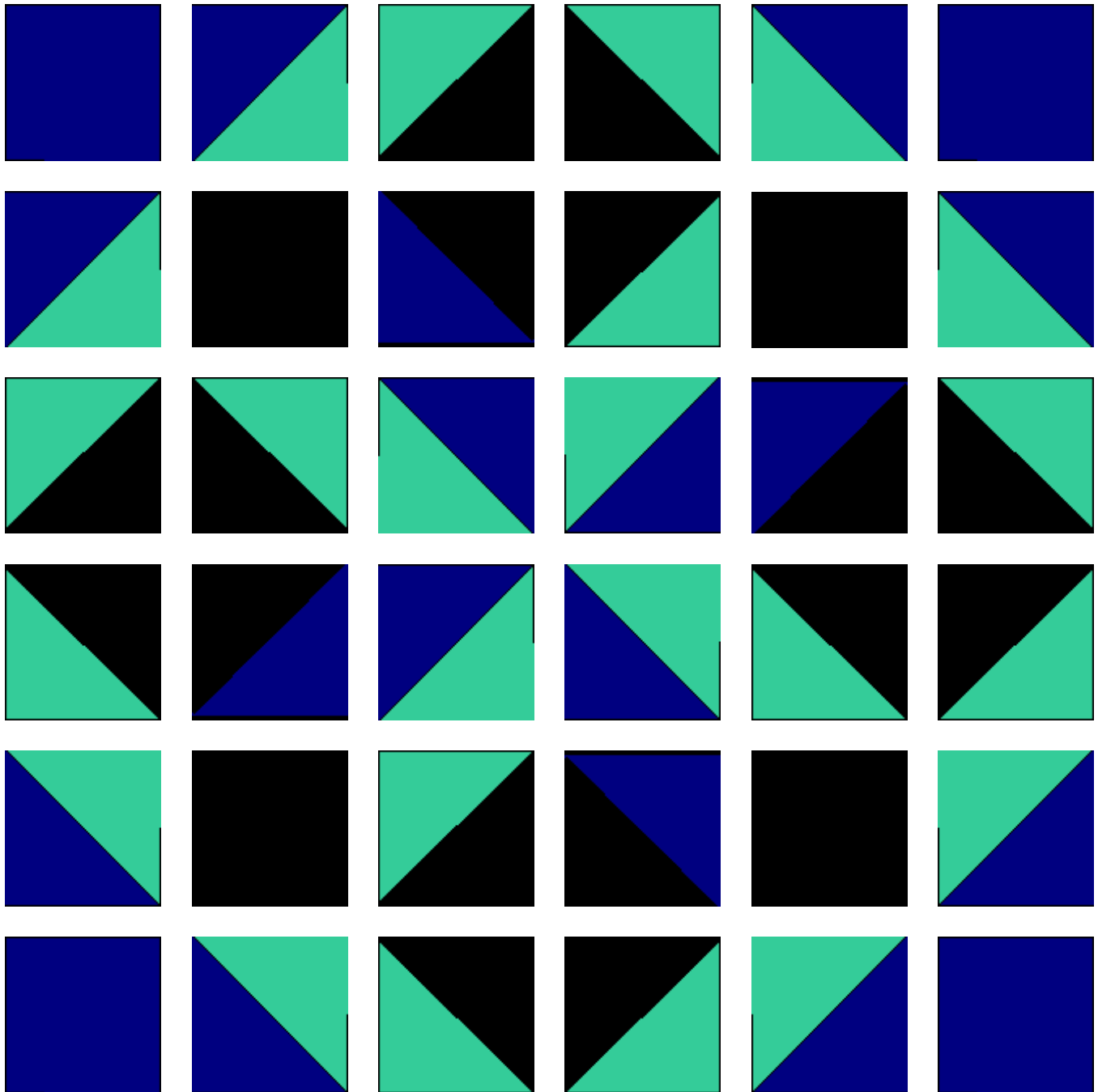
This month's block makes Half-Square Triangles (HSTs) using a printed paper foundation such as Triangles-On-A-Roll or Thangles. You may, of course, use any other method you wish to make HSTs, as long as your finished HSTs are 1-1/2" square (2" square unfinished). If you purchase triangle papers, you will need the ones formatted for 4 1-1/2" finished HSTs. Included with this pattern is a page of triangle papers you can print - but be sure to measure the pattern to check size. Each printed square should be 2-3/8" x 2-3/8"; the rectangle of three squares by four squares should be 7-1/8" x 9-1/2". In Adobe Reader, page scaling must be turned off to get the accurate size. Click on File, Print, and under Page Scaling, select "None."

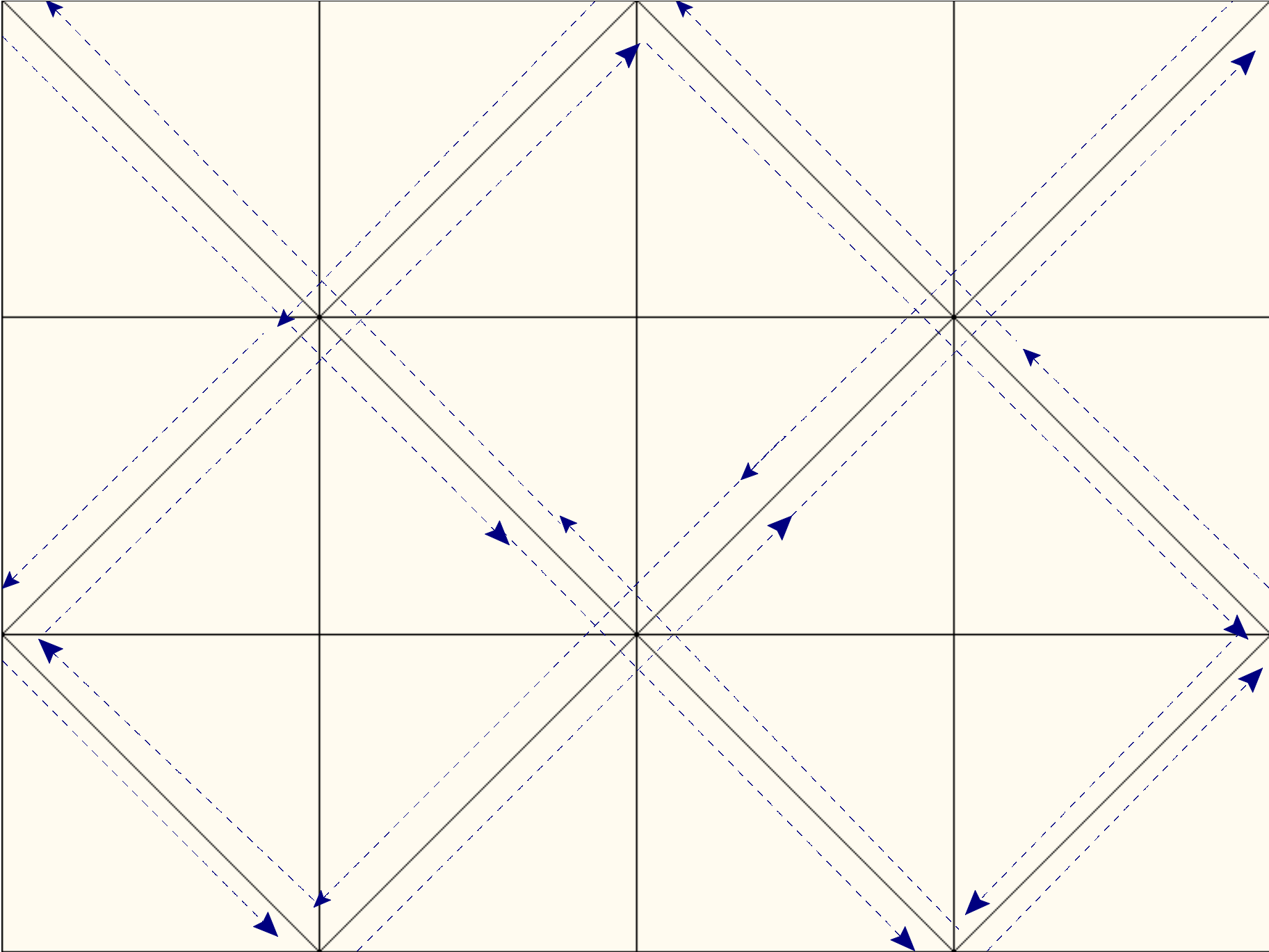
If you use the attached sheet of foundations, print two copies of the page. Cut one copy in half so you have two sheets of two-by-three squares (two squares wide by three squares high). From the second copy, cut a unit of one-by-two squares (one row high by two squares wide).

Layer one Blue and one Blue-Green 5-1/4" x 7-1/2" rectangle, right sides together. Pin one of the two-by-three-square paper foundations on top. If using commercial triangle papers, sew on all of the dotted lines, following the arrows. However, if using the foundation sheet provided with this pattern, you will note that the dotted lines are not a consistent 1/4" from the solid lines. Sew 1/4" from the solid lines, simply using the directions of the arrows to tell you which way to sew. When finished, cut the pieces apart and around edges on all of the solid lines. Press flat to set stitches, and then press open. Repeat using one Blue-Green and one Black 5-1/4" x 7-1/2" rectangle, and the other two-by-three-square paper foundation. Then repeat using one Blue and one Black 5-1/4" x 2-3/4" rectangle, and the one-by-two-square paper foundation. **Tip:** If you shorten your stitch length (I use 1.5mm), the paper is easier to remove.

You should have 12 HSTs of Blue and Blue-Green, 12 HSTs of Blue-Green and Black, and 4 HSTs of Blue and Black.

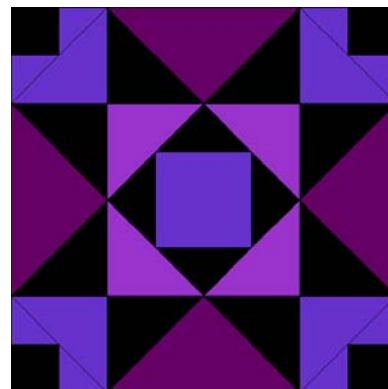
Arrange your block as shown below, and stitch together in rows. Press seams on rows 1, 3, and 5 to the right, and on rows 2, 4, and 6 to the left. This will allow your seams to “nest” together as you join the rows. Press all joined rows in the same direction (i.e., all seam up or all seams down).





Preliminary notes about fabric selection: To make our Color Wheel stars sparkle, all backgrounds for the 12 blocks are black. Each month's block emphasizes a different color, with a black background. Some blocks also use other colors, in addition to the main color. When choosing your fabrics (including the black for the backgrounds), you may use solids, or prints that read as solids (for example Moda Marbles, or color-on-color prints like a red-on-red or green-on-green). Don't worry about trying to get the exact same shade or tone that others are using - the variety will add interest to the finished quilt. (For example, the June block uses Red-Orange fabric. We will have different ideas about what constitutes the color Red-Orange.)

February 2016 - Blue-Violet - Modern Star
Finished Size: 12" square
Skill Building - Flying Geese (another method)
Review of Square-in-a-Square



Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) each of Violet, Blue-Violet, Red-Violet, and Black (Violet is also used in March; Violet and Red-Violet are also used in April. Keep all leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

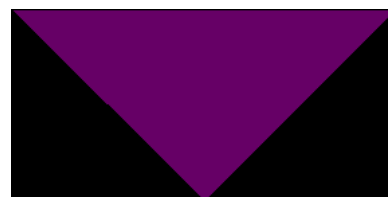
Cutting Instructions:

- Black - (A) One 4-1/4" square, cut twice on the diagonal (in an "X" forming four triangles)
 (B) Four 2" squares
 (C) Four 3-7/8" squares, cut once on the diagonal (forming two triangles)
- Blue-Violet - (D) One 3-1/2" square
 (E) Four 2-3/8" squares, cut once on the diagonal (forming two triangles)
 (F) Two 3-7/8" squares, cut once on the diagonal (forming two triangles)
- Violet - (G) Two 3-7/8" squares, cut once on the diagonal (forming two triangles)
- Red-Violet - (H) One 7-1/4" square, cut twice on the diagonal (in an "X" forming four triangles) (Alternatively, you can cut two 5-1/8" squares, cut once on the diagonal. Take extra care with these pieces, as the bias edge will be on the outside.)

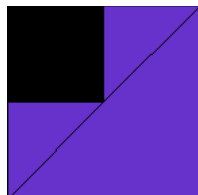
Piecing Instructions:

Flying Geese Units:

Sew one Black (C) triangle to each side of a Red-Violet (H) triangle to create a Flying Geese unit. Repeat three more times. **Tip:** When you lay the Black triangle face down on the Red-Violet triangle, match up the two straight edges, letting the Black triangle point extend past the center of the Red-Violet triangle.



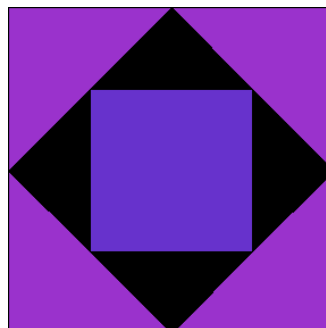
Corner Units:



Sew one of the Blue-Violet (E) triangles to two adjoining sides of a Black (B) 2" square. Then sew the resulting triangle to one of the Blue-Violet (F) triangles.

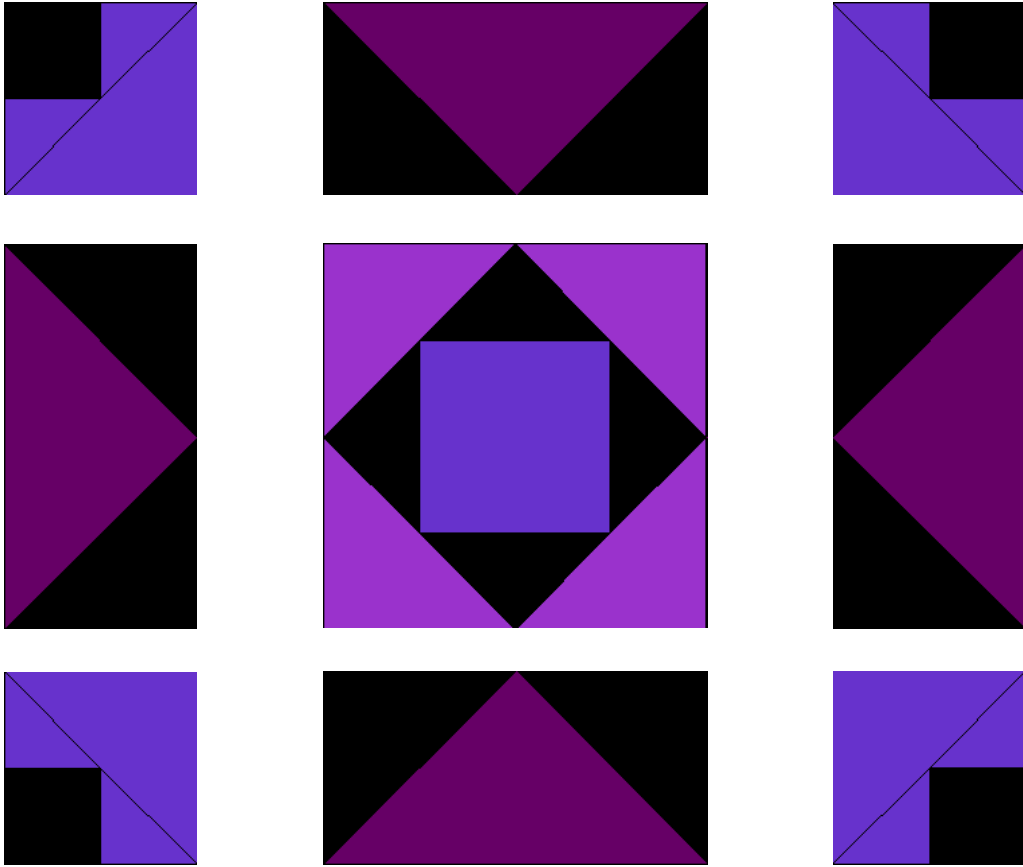
Square-in-a-Square Center:

Review the directions for making Square-in-a-Square units in the December block instructions. Begin by sewing the four Black (A) triangles to the four sides of the Blue-Violet (D) 3-1/2" square. Using the resulting square, sew the Violet (G) triangles to each of the four sides.



Assembling the Block:

Arrange your block as shown below, stitch together in rows, and then join rows. (Because of all the adjacent points, you may find it easier to press these joining seams open, rather than to one side.)



Preliminary notes about fabric selection: To make our Color Wheel stars sparkle, all backgrounds for the 12 blocks are black. Each month's block emphasizes a different color, with a black background. Some blocks also use other colors, in addition to the main color. When choosing your fabrics (including the black for the backgrounds), you may use solids, or prints that read as solids (for example Moda Marbles, or color-on-color prints like a red-on-red or green-on-green). Don't worry about trying to get the exact same shade or tone that others are using - the variety will add interest to the finished quilt. (For example, the June block uses Red-Orange fabric. We will have different ideas about what constitutes the color Red-Orange.)

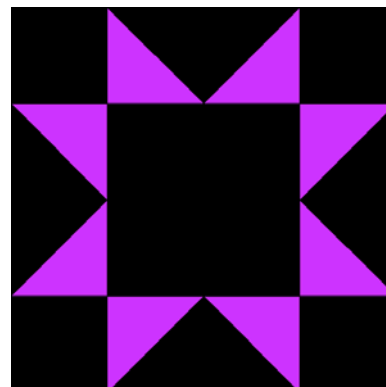
March 2016 - Violet - Sawtooth Star
Finished Size: 6" square
Skill Building - Maintaining Sharp Points

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) of Black; leftover Violet from February.
 (Keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly.)

Cutting Instructions:

Black - One 3-1/2" square
 Four 2" squares
 One 4-1/4" square, cut twice on the diagonal
 (in an "X" forming four triangles)

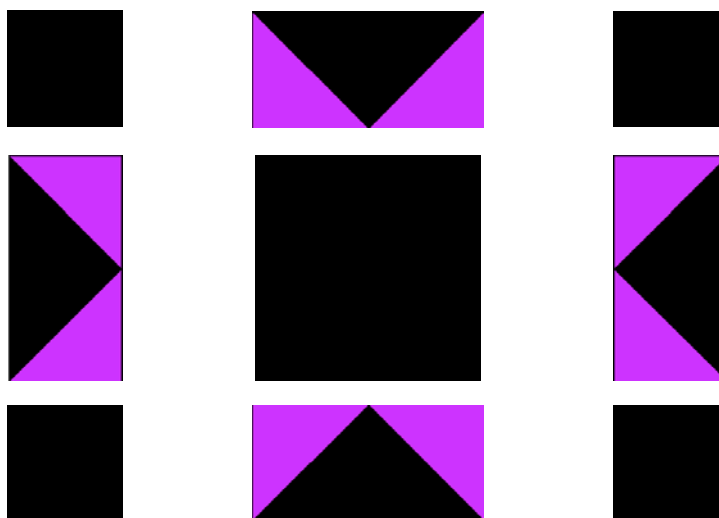
Violet - Four 2-1/2" squares, cut once on the diagonal



Piecing Instructions:

Follow instructions from the February block to sew one Violet triangle to each side of a Black triangle, creating a Flying Geese unit. Square up to 2" x 3-1/2", being sure to leave yourself a full 1/4" seam allowance past the point. Repeat three more times. Lay out block as shown below, and stitch together in rows, pressing seams in top and bottom rows to the outside, and seams in center row to the inside. Join rows, pressing both seams toward the center.

How to prevent cutting off your points: Many quilters have difficulty maintaining nice, sharp points at both the inside of the Flying Geese units (next to the center square), and at the outer tips of the star points (where there should be a full 1/4" seam allowance beyond the point). There are three common causes for this, two at the piecing stage and one during the pressing. (1) Ensure that the pieces you're stitching together are perfectly aligned. Try using a couple of pins to hold your fabrics in place as you stitch. When you finish stitching a unit, turn it over and check to be sure you caught both sides of the fabric evenly. (2) Use a full 1/4" seam allowance. It's helpful to use a stiletto (or the tip of your scissors or seam ripper) to hold the fabrics in place until just before they pass under the needle, to prevent slippage at the edges. (3) When pressing, first press flat to "set" the stitches. Then press the unit open from the front, letting the weight of the iron push the top piece up and away from the bottom piece. This will prevent the small crease that often occurs right at the seam line when pressed from the back first. If your seam allowance turns under while pressing from the front, then turn the unit over and press the seam allowance in the correct direction.



Preliminary notes about fabric selection: To make our Color Wheel stars sparkle, all backgrounds for the 12 blocks are black. Each month's block emphasizes a different color, with a black background. Some blocks also use other colors, in addition to the main color. When choosing your fabrics (including the black for the backgrounds), you may use solids, or prints that read as solids (for example Moda Marbles, or color-on-color prints like a red-on-red or green-on-green). Don't worry about trying to get the exact same shade or tone that others are using - the variety will add interest to the finished quilt. (For example, the June block uses Red-Orange fabric. We will have different ideas about what constitutes the color Red-Orange.)

April 2016 - Red-Violet - LeMoynes Star
Finished Size: 9"
Skill Building - Set-In Seams (or Y-Seams)

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) Black; leftover Red-Violet and Violet from February (keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly)

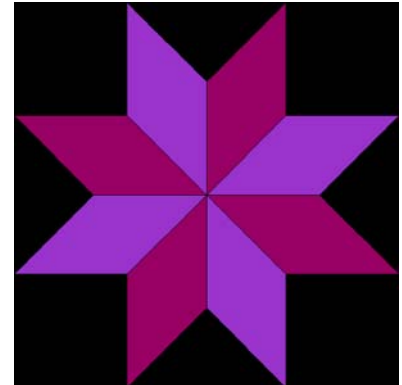
Cutting Instructions:

Black - Four 3-1/2" squares
One 5-3/4" square, cut twice on the diagonal
(in an "X" forming four triangles)
(All of these pieces are intentionally cut over-sized)

Red-Violet - Four of Template A

Violet - Four of Template A

Cutting Tip: To cut the Template A diamonds, first cut a 2-3/8" strip of each of the Violet fabrics. Lay the strips on top of one another, right sides up, and then use the template to cut the four diamonds.



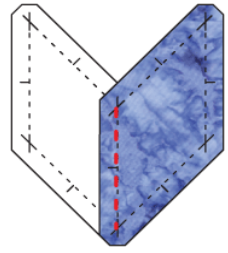
Piecing Instructions:

Set-in Seams (also called Y-Seams and inset seams) are intimidating to many quilters, but they needn't be. Once you get the hang of them, they're a breeze! This block gives you 24 opportunities to practice, so you're sure to be a pro by the time you finish it. When you sew most seams, you sew all the way from edge to edge. With set-in or Y-seams, you start and stop sewing at the 1/4" mark, never sewing into the seam allowance. If your block doesn't lie flat, it's usually because you've sewn one or two stitches into the seam allowance. You will have to pick out those stitches in order for the seam to lie flat. The trick to perfect set-in seams is in marking the seam lines, and then matching the points where they intersect. First, draw lines to mark the 1/4" seam lines on the backs of each of the 16 pieces you cut.



Next, lay out the block pieces as shown in the block photo. Begin by sewing the star pieces together, working around the star in a clockwise direction. Place a Violet star segment and a Red-Violet star segment right sides together. Put a "positioning pin" through the points where the seam lines intersect, matching them up precisely. You also may want to add a pin (or more, for longer seams) in the center of the seam line. Keeping the positioning pins vertical, use a couple of additional pins to secure the two pieces of fabric together, and then remove the positioning pins.

Next, sew the seam, starting and stopping at the points where the seam allowances intersect; in other words, at the 1/4" point on each end. I like to take a backstitch or two to secure the piece, but I recommend not backstitching until you get used to starting and stopping right at that 1/4" point. Instead, leave a 2" thread tail (top and bobbin thread) on each end. That way, if you end up having to pick out a stitch or two that went over into the seam allowance, your thread tails will still be long enough that the stitches won't pop out, leaving part of the seam open.



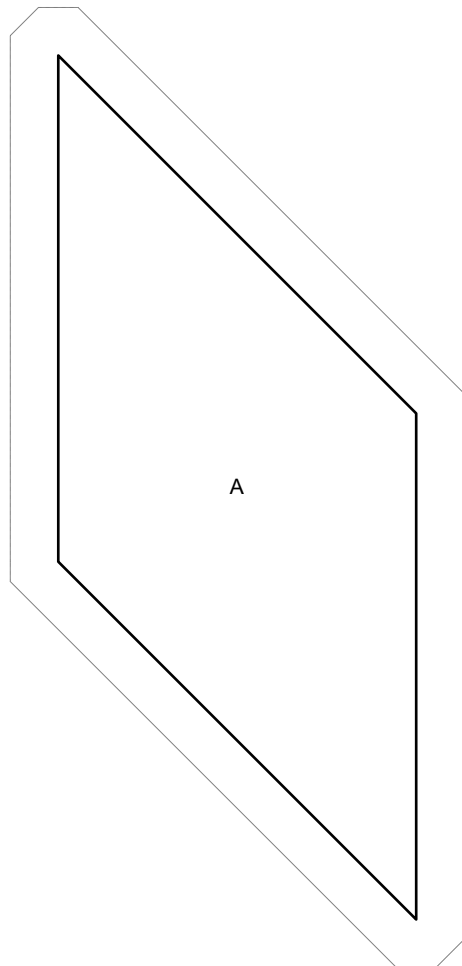
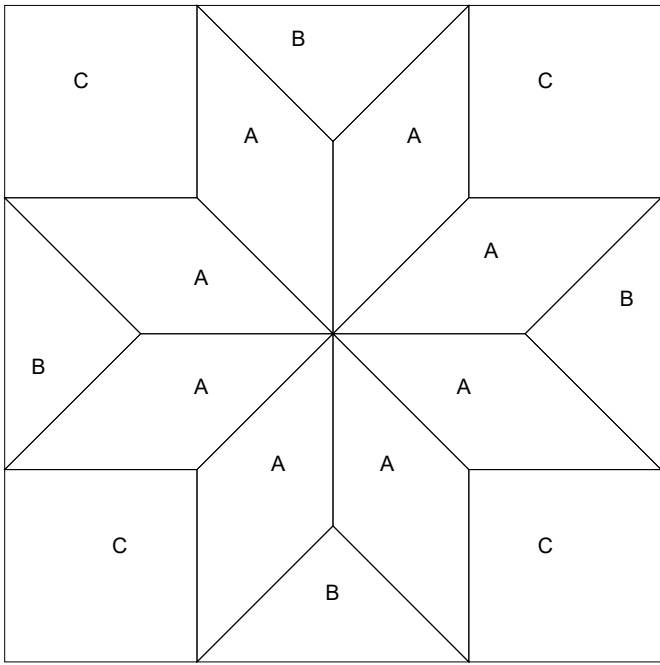
Continue adding pieces around the star, alternating colors, until half of the star is complete (i.e., four star points). Press all of the star seams in the same direction. Repeat to join the other half of the star points.



I like to add the center triangle and two outer corners to each half before I join the two halves, and then add the side triangles last. However, if desired, you could join the two star halves, and then add all of the outer set-in pieces. The triangles and corner squares are added using the same piecing method as the star points, matching the intersection points with positioning pins, pinning, and sewing from point to point. To sew the side triangles, first match and pin one side. Sew from the outside edge to the center stopping point, and take a single backstitch. Then, without cutting the thread, lift your presser foot and pull the star out a couple of inches. Turn the piece and match the other side of the triangle with the other star point. Then put it back under the needle, and hand-turn until the needle goes right back in the hole where the thread is coming out. Take a single backstitch, and continue sewing to the other outside edge. This will give you a nice, flat turn with a sharp inner point. Here's a website with a good tutorial using this method: <http://www.the-littlest-thistle.com/2014/10/finish-along-quarter-3-tutorial-week.html>

Note: The side triangles and corner square are intentionally cut larger than they need to be. Don't worry that the sides of these pieces extend past the edges of your block. The only points you need to worry about are the interior seam intersections. Having these outside pieces cut over-sized makes it really easy to square up your block, leaving a full 1/4" seam allowance so your star points don't get cut off.

Now that you've made the star using set-in seams, I must confess that there are dozens of tutorials on the web that show easier ways of making LeMoyne Stars without any set-in seams. Nevertheless, knowing how to sew a set-in seam is a useful skill to learn. For example, using set-in seams, you can insert a fussy-cut square of fabric into a contrasting frame with no seam lines. I encourage you to take the plunge and give it a try! Be patient with yourself as you learn this new skill.



Below are two ideas for setting your blocks together. Of course, there are dozens more!
Take your blocks out to play, and decide on a setting that makes you smile!

“STAR POWER” BOM/BOQ SETTING IDEA 1 - “TWIST & SHOUT”

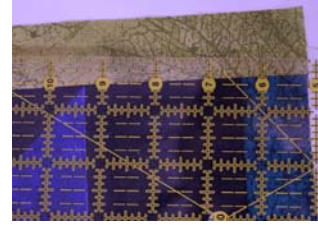
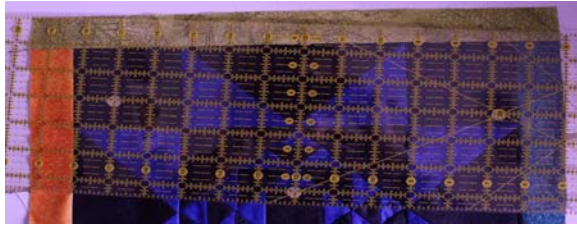
In this setting, you will be framing each of your blocks with colorful “power bar coping strips”* to make all 12 blocks the same size, and twisting the blocks to make them dance across your quilt. As you will see, this method is very forgiving - it doesn’t matter if your blocks didn’t come out exactly the right size. This is a fun way to set together blocks of various sizes. See suggestions at the end of the instructions for variations you could try.

I suggest you read through the instructions before you begin.

1. Cut 6 Black strips 1-1/2" wide, across the width of the fabric. Sew the strips end-to-end, using a straight seam. Cut 8 segments 13-1/2" long, and 8 segments 14-1/2" long.
2. Cut 6 Black strips 2-1/4" wide. Sew the strips end-to-end, using a straight seam. Cut 8 segments 12-1/2" long, and 8 segments 14-1/2" long.
3. Cut 6 Black strips 3" wide. Sew the strips end-to-end, using a straight seam. Cut 8 segments 9-3/4" long, and 8 segments 14-1/2" long.
4. Retrieve all of your scraps of colored fabrics from the 12 months of stars. Press the scraps and lay them out so you can see what you have left (which will differ from person to person depending on how you cut, whether you used FQs or 1/4-yd cuts, whether you made any mistakes and had to recut pieces, etc.). Pull out any scraps that are narrower than 1-1/2" wide, or shorter than 6-1/2" long, and put them in your scrap bag (or bring them to a meeting to donate to our charity quilt stash). Cut as many 1-1/2" strips as you can get from your colored scraps. Cut along the length of each piece so the strips end up as long as possible.
5. Begin with one of the 12" blocks (February’s Blue-Violet Modern Star, June’s Red-Orange Spinning Star, October’s Yellow-Green Pinwheel Star, or December’s Blue Midnight Star). Press the block thoroughly, checking the back to be sure you don’t have any twisted or crimped seam allowances. Select one of your colored strips (in any color) that is at least as long as your block. Lay the strip on top of one edge of the block, right sides together, matching the edges. Trim the strip to the same length as the block, and sew it to the block. Press toward the coping strip.
6. Place the block right side up on the cutting mat with the colored strip on the left-hand side. Select another strip, in any color (even the same color as the first strip - any color will work), that is at least as long as the block with the attached strip. Lay the new strip along the top edge, right sides together, matching the edges. Trim it to the same length as that edge (including the already-sewn strip), and sew it to the block. Press toward the coping strip. Repeat these steps for the other two sides of the block. Your block now should have a colored strip sewn to each side.
7. Now it’s time to twist and trim the block to 13-1/2" square. If you have a 14" or larger square ruler, you can use that. Angle the ruler on the framed block and trim to give it a twist, making sure you leave at least 1/4" seam allowance outside the corners of the star block. It doesn’t matter how much, or how little, of a twist you give the star, or whether you make it twist to the right or the left. (See diagram below.)

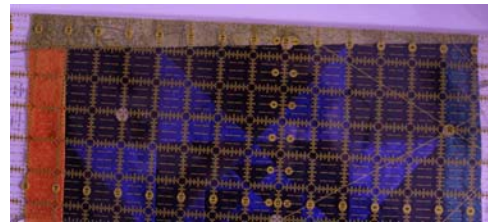
* The term “power bar coping strips” comes from “Setting Solutions” by Sharon Craig (C&T Pub. 2001). “Setting Solutions” includes lots of tips for setting together various-sized blocks, harmonizing clashing colors, and using up those random blocks hiding in your stash.

If you don't have a large enough square ruler, here's how to twist and trim your block. Begin on any side, and place your ruler so the 1/4" line is at one corner of the star block, and the ruler's long edge runs right through the opposite corner. (See photos below - photo on right is closeup of right edge.)



← 1/4" line at corner of star block

After trimming, that edge will look like this:



Align that cut edge with a straight line on your cutting mat, and trim the other three sides to square up the block to 13-1/2" (unfinished).

8. Retrieve 2 of your 1-1/2" x 13-1/2" Black strips. Sew them to two opposite sides of the block. Trim the block to 14-1/2" wide. **Note that you are not twisting the block this time; you are just trimming it straight, with the Black strip the same width across the entire side.**



Tip: You want your outer Black strips to end up the same width. For that to happen, you must trim the same amount from each of the two Black strips. Lay the block on your cutting mat with the Black strips on the sides. Measure from edge to edge, and subtract 14-1/2". Divide by 2, and cut that amount from each side. (Example: If your block measures 15-1/2" from side to side, and you subtract 14-1/2", you end up with 1". Half of that is 1/2", so you would cut 1/2" from each Black strip.

Next, retrieve 2 of your 1-1/2" x 14-1/2" Black strips, and sew them to the other two sides of the block. Measure and trim as described above, to make the block 14-1/2" square.

9. Repeat Steps 5 through 8 for the other three 12" star blocks. Note that you can twist the star in either direction; if you start at the left side, instead of the right, the block will spin the other way (so your ruler's 1/4" line would be at the upper left corner of the star block, with the ruler angling up and to the right, instead of up and to the left). Each of the four 12" blocks should be squared to 14-1/2".

10. Repeat the above steps to add colored strips to all four sides of a 9" block. Twist and trim as you did with the 12" blocks. After trimming to make the block twist, then add a second row of strips around the 9" block. When you're ready to twist and trim, use the same angle as before - in other words, if you started by lining up your ruler's 1/4" line with the right-hand corner, angling up to the left, do the same thing again. (If you angle the other way, you'll just bring your block back to straight up and down again, instead of having it twist to the side. Guess how I know. . . .)

After the second trimming, retrieve 2 of your Black 2-1/4" x 12-1/2" strips. Cut the strips to the width of the block using the same method you used for the colored strips. Sew the strips to opposite sides of the 9" block. Measure and trim the block to 14-1/2" wide as described above in Step 8. Then add one of your Black 2-1/4" x 14-1/2" strips to the other two sides, and square the whole block up to 14-1/2". Repeat for the other three 9" blocks.

11. The 6" blocks are finished in the same way as the other blocks, but this time, you will add three rounds of colored strips, twisting and trimming after each round. After the third trimming, retrieve 2 of your Black 3" x 9-3/4" strips; cut to size as before, and sew to opposite sides of the block. Measure the width and trim to 14-1/2" wide as described above in Step 8. Then add one of your Black 3" x 14-1/2" strips to each of the remaining sides, and square the whole block up to 14-1/2". Repeat for the other three 6" blocks.

12. Arrange the 12 blocks into 4 rows of 3 blocks each. Play with the arrangement - I like to lay out my blocks in different arrangements, and take photos. It's easier for me to visualize how the finished quilt will look in a photo than it is looking at the blocks. When you decide on an arrangement, join the blocks together in rows. Press joining seams in rows 1 and 3 to the right, and in rows 2 and 4 to the left. Then join the rows together, pressing all joining seams in the same direction.

13. Add borders as desired. I stitched some of my remaining 1-1/2" colored strips together end-to-end, to create a 1" inner border, and then had just enough Black remaining for a 3" outer border. This left me with a dilemma regarding what to use for binding. I elected to buy another 1/2 yd. of the Black for binding.

VARIATIONS - some different ways to change how you frame your blocks::

- ★ If you have lots of the colored fabrics left over, you might want to cut your coping strips wider than 1-1/2" to make the quilt larger.
- ★ You could vary the widths of the colored strips in any (or all) of several different ways, such as (1) alternating thin and thick strips; (2) placing thin strips on two adjoining sides, and thick strips on the other two sides; (3) using thinner strips on the largest blocks, and making the strips thicker as the blocks get smaller; (4) picking certain colors for thick strips, and certain colors for thinner ones.
- ★ Instead of attaching strips around the block Log Cabin style, you could sew strips to opposite sides first, and then the other two sides (in the same manner as the final Black strips are attached).
- ★ Start by framing the blocks with Black strips (with or without trimming to twist the blocks), and then add one or more rounds of colored strips. This would make the blocks "float" in the center of the colored frames.



“STAR POWER” BOM/BOQ SETTING IDEA 2 - “FLOATING STARS”

In this setting, you will be framing each of your blocks to make all 12 blocks the same size. Then you will add colorful triangles to the corners, and join the blocks with Black sashing. This is a super easy way to set together blocks of different sizes.

I suggest you read through the instructions before you begin.

1. Cut 48 squares 2-1/2" x 2-1/2" from your leftover colored scraps. On the back of each square, draw one diagonal line from corner to corner.
2. Measure your remaining leftovers of colored fabrics. Cut several 1"-wide strips from each fabric that is at least 11-1/2" long. If you have some colors that are shorter than 11-1/2", you can cut 1" strips and piece them together until they are at least 11-1/2" long.
3. Add a 3" Black strip to all four sides of each of your 6-1/2" (unfinished) blocks. Square the blocks up to 11-1/2". **Tip:** This is the perfect time to compensate for any differences in the sizes of your blocks. If your blocks ended up a little smaller than 6-1/2", then cut your Black strips a little wider. If your blocks ended up a little larger than 6-1/2", then cut your Black strips a little narrower.
4. Add a 1-1/2" wide Black strip to all four sides of each of your 9-1/2" (unfinished) blocks, compensating as you did for the smaller blocks for any variations in your block sizes. Square the blocks up to 11-1/2".
5. You now have 8 blocks that measure 11-1/2" square. Add a 1" colored strip to each side of these 8 blocks, choosing one of the two methods described below. In my sample quilt, I used Method 1 on the 6" stars, and Method 2 on the 9" stars, so you can see which you prefer.

Method 1: Cut 16 of the 1" colored strips to 11-1/2" lengths. Sew colored strips to two opposite sides of the 8 blocks. Then cut 16 of the 1" colored strips to 12-1/2" lengths. Sew these strips to the remaining two sides of each block.

Method 2: (a) Cut 8 of the 1" colored strips to 11-1/2" lengths. Sew these to one side of each of the 8 blocks. (b) Cut 16 of the 1" colored strips to 12" lengths. Use the "Log Cabin" method to add these strips to the blocks, sewing the strips either clockwise or counterclockwise around the block, always adding a strip to the side adjacent to the last strip you added. (c) For the final side of each of the blocks, cut 8 of the 1" colored strips to 12-1/2" lengths, and add these to the last side of each block.

6. Now all 12 of your blocks measure 12-1/2". Frame each of the 12 blocks with Black 1-1/2" wide strips.
7. Retrieve your colored squares, and select one of the star blocks to work with. Place a colored square in one of the corners, lining up the edges of the colored square with the edges of the block. The diagonal line drawn on the back of the colored square should run from one edge of the star block to the adjacent edge, rather than extending out from the corner of the block. Sew right on the drawn line. Before trimming, flip the lower half of the colored triangle up toward the corner to check placement. The edges of the triangle should line up with the edges of the block. If placement is correct, flip the triangle back down flat. Align the 1/4" line of your ruler just outside the stitching line (toward the corner), and trim. (**Take care** not to trim on the wrong side of the stitching line! You are trimming off two little triangles.) Press toward the colored triangle. Repeat for the other three corners of the block, and then for all four corners of each of the remaining 11 blocks.

8. Cut 8 strips 1-1/2" wide across the width of your Black fabric. Subcut 4 of those into 8 strips that are 11-1/2" long. Join the other 4 width-of-fabric strips to make one long 1-1/2" strip, and set aside.

9. Arrange the 12 blocks into 4 rows of 3 blocks each. Play with the arrangement - I like to lay out my blocks in different arrangements, and take photos. It's easier for me to visualize how the finished quilt will look in a photo than it is looking at the blocks. When you decide on an arrangement, join the blocks into rows using the Black 1-1/2" strips in between the blocks.

10. Measure your rows. If you're a "perfect piecer," they should measure 45-1/2", but yours could be a bit shorter or longer. Use the measurement of the shortest of your four rows, and cut three strips that length from your long Black 1-1/2" strip. Join the rows placing these 1-1/2" strips between the rows, easing as necessary if all rows are not an identical width.

11. Add one or more borders as desired. **Tip:** If you want the outer border of a quilt to end up a specific width, add an extra inch when you cut and apply the borders. This will allow for squaring up after any distortion caused by the quilting.

12. Quilt and bind as desired, and enjoy!

Variations: You could make your framing strips wider and the triangles larger. You could make the sashing between the blocks and rows wider or narrower. You could add a sashing row around the outside, adding triangles to complete the four-triangle units around the edges.

