



Christmas Giving

Timeless Stitches — Quilt Capital of Kansas

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‘Tis the Season for shopping, gift lists and gift wrapping. I used to avoid giving handmade gifts at Christmas because I had to quilt so many quilts that customers wanted in time for Christmas. It didn’t leave enough time for me to make gifts. I saved hand-made gifts for birthdays to spread out the workload.

Fast forward a few years and I am deeply immersed in making gifts for my family. After all, I have a significant stash of fabric to use up and this seems to be an excellent way to re-purpose some of it. It is physically more difficult to shop now and dealing with crowds of people and lack of parking spaces are not my favorite activities. I don’t attempt to come up with bed-sized quilts for everyone. Instead, I focus on smaller items—embroidered towels, casserole carriers, fabric bags, or table runners.

At first the problem was what to get everyone. Socks? Maybe, but everyone had their favorite brands and not all were available in the same store. Then the light bulb glowed bright! None of the men in my life would turn down a homemade pie! I asked about their favorite flavors and had that all figured out. Scheduling the baking so that the pies are fresh can be a little challenging depending on when we will see the recipients.

Projects for the ladies vary more. I started with kitchen towels embroidered on my embroidery machine. That didn’t take long so I decided that each of them needed a coordinating potholder. Finding myself in potholder mode, I decided to make potholders for the men as well. After all, this is an equal opportunity family. So, I added a potholder under each of those pie plates. Imagine how surprised I was to find out that the potholders were a hit. My grandson and my granddaughter’s boyfriend, who each had their own apartments, were excited that someone made a potholder for them! My grandson didn’t have a potholder and was “making do” with various creative ways to protect his hands from hot dishes. It has now become a tradition—I will be making at least 25 potholders between now and Christmas. They only take a few minutes once I get them cut out. The potholders may be either square or hexagonal. I find the square version simpler and faster to make. The patterns for both are included at the end of the article.

Last year I sorted through my completed projects and found a number of table runners and wall hangings. I had the ladies draw numbers and take turns choosing which one they wanted. This year I needed a new idea. I am waiting for some rayon batiks to arrive so I can make “dressy” scarves for them. If that fabric doesn’t get here soon, I will have to try Plan B. In the meantime, I can attack that stack of potholder pieces and get them made.

Good luck with your Christmas gifting. Happy Holidays!

Potholder instructions

Decide on a size for the squares. 9" is a good size. I use 8 ½" because I have a square up ruler that is 8 ½" square.

Cut 1 square for the back, 4 squares for the front, one square of muslin or other fabric that will not show on the finished potholder, one square from **COTTON** batting.

Fold the 4 squares for the front in half and press.

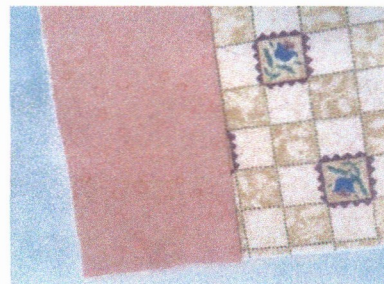
Stack the squares as follows:

Muslin square or other odd fabric (if a print, place right side down), Cotton batting,

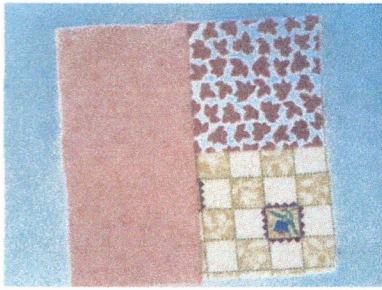
square for the back (right side up).



Stack the folded squares on top with folded edge toward center.

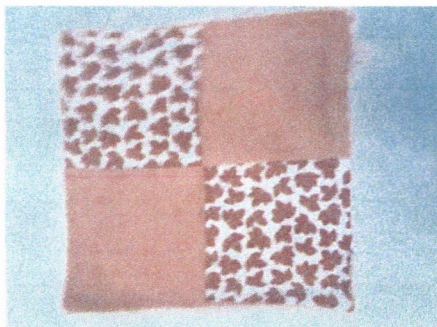


Add the second folded square. Be aware which direction you will sew so that you can lap one over the other so that you will sew smoothly over the edge.

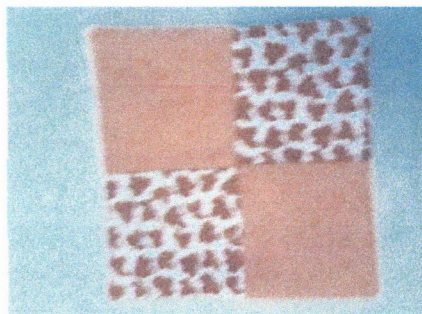


Continue until all four pieces are in place. Pin loosely in place.

Sew around the edge using a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance.



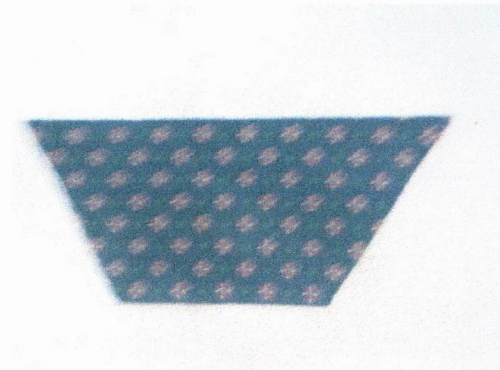
Cut bulk from corners. Turn the potholder right side out. Shape the corners.



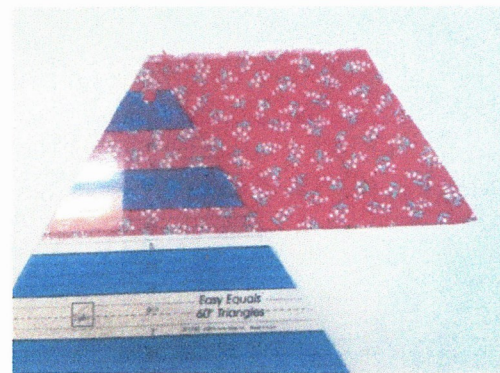
Bar tack across the center.

Hexagon Potholder

Cut three 9" strips of fabric. Fold each in half and press.



From each strip cut a half hexagon.



The ruler is a 60 degree triangle. The wide edge is placed on the fold. The folded edge is twice the side edge of the triangle. The

short edge of the piece is the same width as the side of the triangle.

Arrange the half-hexagons. The folded edge is toward the center. Each piece lies behind two other pieces.



Secure the placement.

Cut an additional hexagon for the back and one for the inside (either muslin or other fabric) and press them open. Cut a hexagon of **cotton** batting the same size. Place a

hexagon, right side down, on top of the arranged half hexagons, the cotton batting hexagon on top of that, and the muslin or other fabric on top of that (right side up if applicable).



Sew around the outside edge using a 1/2" seam allowance.

Turn right side out. Shape corners. Bar tack the center.