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SMALL PROJECTS – Paper Piecing

Flying Geese Picture Frame Project (1 Video)

Transcript:

Paper foundation piecing is a good skill for beginners to learn as it helps with sewing accurately. There are many small projects that you can make with paper foundation pieced blocks. In this video, I'll show you how to paper piece this Flying Geese block with 3 triangles. The finished size for this pattern is a 2 ½ by 3 inch rectangle.

You'll want to download a copy of this pattern at LearnHowToQuilt.com under **Small Projects** or **under Beginner Basics - Paper Piecing**.

I've cut out my pattern on the dashed lines. The solid lines are my sew lines. The numbers on the pattern show the order in which to sew my fabric pieces.

When choosing fabric for this project, you'll want to look for small scale prints with lots of contrast. I've used the same red and printed fabrics in both of these blocks. It looks OK in this 3" block where the triangles are larger but when we get into the smaller block you'll see it blends in with the background.

When paper piecing, always make sure to PRESS your fabric before cutting and after sewing.

I like to take an old postcard/card and fold the dark lines on the paper. Every time I fold this paper, fibers are weakened. Later on this will make it easier to pull of the paper. I also find this helps with fabric positioning and trimming seams. So I'll take my card. I'll put it between the #1 and #2 lines and then fold that over. I can fold the lines as I sew or I find it easier to get them done all at once.

I'll be following along with these instructions as I cut and sew. You can find these at LearnHowToQuilt.com under **Beginner Basics - Paper Piecing** or you can find them under the **Small Projects** section.

Just a reminder, you always want to press your fabric before sewing. I've folded the line between #1 and #2 and I will place Fabric #1 over the top of this shape. I could cut a triangular shape but I actually like to cut rectangles bigger than that shape. I'm going to cut a piece that is bigger than that shape. In paper piecing there's no set seam allowance but you must cut your fabric large enough to cover that whole shape with extras left over. I can see that that more than enough covers that shape.

Let me put my finger on #1 and turn this over. I can see that Fabric #1 goes right here. I'll pin that in place.

I'll turn it over and I need to check by holding this up to the light to see if my fabric covers this corner, that corner and that corner. Take your piece and hold it up to the light and you can see the shadow in the background of where the fabric is. Certainly all three of these corners are covered with fabric.

I'll fold the paper between #1 and #2 down. I am going to trim. I'll eyeball a 1/8 of an inch to a 1/4 inch; from there to there. It doesn't have to be perfect and trim that off.

Now I am ready for Fabric #2. I'll take Fabric #2 and you can see it's going to be a triangle but I don't like to cut triangles. I usually use rectangles. So let me cut a rectangle. I can see that this will more than enough cover that #2 spot. My fabric always has to go on the back. I like to put my finger on #2 and turn it over. My fabric will go right here next to #1.

When I sew, I put right sides together. The same is true of paper piecing. I need to put right sides together. This piece of fabric I can't move because it is pinned. So I will flip this over. I'll put right sides together. I see that pin is in the way there so I am going to pull that out. I'll hold on to all this and turn it over.

I am ready to take it to the sewing machine. Right now I could sew down this line between #1 and #2 but I am cautious of that. I usually like to put a pin on that line to baste it. Pin that line. Let's turn this back over. Let me fold this piece back and I would hold it up to the light and check. I want to make sure that that fabric covers this corner, that corner and that corner of the #2 space. Let me take this over to the sewing machine to sew.

I'm using red thread so you can see well. Usually I am using a neutral color of thread. A larger needle will help perforate your patterns to make it easier to tear later on but it is not necessary. You can also use a shorter stitch length to help with this perforation.

I've marked a little line here where I'm going to begin; 1 to 2 stitches before this black line that goes between #1 and #2. Let me take my pin out. Sew right on that line. When I get up here in the point, I'll just keep stitching 1 to 2 stitches and I am ready to take this out.

Make sure you trim all of these little threads because they have a tendency to get caught up in this and they are really hard to deal with if you don't trim them at first.

Let me press this back. You can just finger press it or I could take it over to the iron but for now I'll just finger press that first piece.

Now I'm ready to add Fabric #3. Come over to this side of the pattern. Here's where Piece #3 goes. I'll fold the line between #1 and #3. You'll notice these stitches up here. Because you have gone 1 to 2 stitches past, they will hold you up and they might start coming out. Don't worry. You are going to take care of those when you sew the next seam. So now I trim. I'm eyeballing a 1/8 to a 1/4 of an inch.

I am ready to position my next piece of fabric. Fabric #3 is about the same size as Fabric #2. So I will cut another rectangle and let's see where that is going to go. Fabric #3 is going to go right here. I'll put my finger there and turn it over. That's where Fabric #3 is going to go when it is all finished but I need to sew it together first.

To sew, I put right sides together. I can't move these two so I am going to have to flip this one down. Turn it over on this side. I don't have to do this. I could just come in and start sewing that line but I usually like to double check with this pin at least until I get use to this pattern. Let me pin baste that line. Let's pull this back. I already can see that this is such a big piece. I know that this piece will cover this corner, that corner and that corner.

Last time I started down in the corner here. It doesn't really make a difference. I could start sewing here or there. This time let me turn it around and I'll show you what happens when you start sewing up here. I'll always want to sew 1 to 2 stitches before that line. Just sew right down that line. When I get to the end here, I want to sew all the way into the #13 spot. I'll sew 1 to 2 stitches. Whoops, that was 3 but that's OK. It doesn't make any difference. I'm going to trim these.

Let me flip that back and show you what that looks like. Instead of finger pressing, I am going to take it over to my iron and press it because I want to make sure that everything is nice and flat before I go any further.

I've pressed my piece and now I am ready to add Fabric #4. First thing I'll do is fold this down. Those stitches right there might not let me fold it down so nice and neatly but I'll fold it as best I can and I am going to trim. I'll eyeball that $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Just go straight across there.

I'll take my Fabric # 4. I've cut this ahead of time. It's my rectangle and it's more than enough to cover that. Let me put my finger on #4 and turn it over. I see that #4 is going to go right here.

To sew, I have to put right sides together. Let me flip this down, turn this over, and put a pin in on that sew line. The line that I will sew is between #2, #3, and #4. I'll flip this back and put the fabric up. This is what it is going to look like after it has been sewn. Let me turn this over. If I hold this up to the light I can see that that fabric more than enough covers this #4 triangle.

So I'm ready to sew. I'll flip that down and bring it over to the sewing machine. Now sometimes these pieces get caught up in there. Make sure when you bring it into the sewing machine that you get those pieces down flat.

When I sew this line here between #2, #3 and #4, I want to start a few stitches before this black horizontal line and I want to end a few stitches after this black horizontal line.

Let me begin. I want to be real careful and make sure I hit the black line here at the tip of this triangle to make sure I have a nice clean tip there. Pull this back and I will finger press this straight line here. You can see that I have a nice crisp tip right here from this triangle.

Let's continue on. Turn it over. The next piece that I am going to add is #5. Fold that line and the more I sew the harder it gets to completely fold that down. I can pull back some of those stitches like I did there or just try to eyeball that ¼" seam. It doesn't have to be perfect.

Now here is piece #5. I have my finger on #5. Turn it over. This piece will go right here. I'll put right sides together when I sew. Flip that over and then I'll bring it back on this side. Pin on that line. Bring it back on this side. I check to see if it covers. I can see that it's going to more than enough cover that spot.

When I go over to the sewing machine, I want to make sure that I am holding these pieces when I put it into the machine because sometimes they get caught. For this line I'll start 1 to 2 stitches before this black line and I'll continue on. Bring it out and trim. Flip this back and I'll finger press that.

Let's say you have a really big seam here and you want to trim that. It's OK to trim whenever you want to; just make sure that this fabric is folded down and that paper is folded down and you are trimming in the right spot. Sometimes there will be shadows if you are using a darker color alongside of a lighter one. See how I am trimming this? I want to get that dark red out of the back. It is not necessary but if you notice a shadow there on the front of your piece then maybe you'll need to do that.

Fold that back and now I am ready for piece #6. Piece #6 is here. I'll fold the line between #4 and #6. Oh, there's a bunch of stuff back here that's getting in the way but I've got that folded and I've trimmed that seam allowance.

Let's turn it over and pick up Piece #6. It will go right here. That's the way it is going to look but I am going to sew. I have to put right sides together. I can pin that and check but I know now that those pieces I am cutting are more than enough to fit there. So I am going to chance it by just taking this over to sew. I could put pins here but if I am real careful and I hold on to all those pieces, I can get it into my machine and begin sewing.

I want to start 1 to 2 stitches past that line. Sew right on that line and when I finish, I want to cross into #13 again. How you cross these lines here when you are stitching, are going to determine if your points are nice and crisp so be really careful when you come in there. I'll fold that back. I'll take that over to the ironing board and press.

I'm ready to go on with the next set of geese. I would add #7, #8, and #9 just like I added #4, #5, and #6.

I've finished sewing all of my fabric up to #9 and I am ready to put on the #10 piece. #10, #11, #12, and #13 are borders that go around these flying geese. This piece covers #10. I'll fold that line. Sometimes these stitches will bug you but just ignore them. Eyeball that seam (1/4" or 1/8") and then let me turn this over. #10 goes right there. I'll flip that back and take this over to the sewing machine.

If you are having problems with pieces getting caught in the sewing machine, then maybe you will want to in them like this. I usually don't use pins. See how that is pinned and maybe that will hold those pieces down. Get rid of that pin now that it is in position. I want to star 1 to 2 stitches before that line and sew. Take out the pin before you get there. Pull this up and get rid of those threads. Now pull this down and I can finger press that.

Now I am ready to do the one up on top. I've cut this big enough to cover #11. I'll fold down the line. It is going to be tricky because of those stitches. I can loosen those stitches or I can just try to get in there and cut that seam. I'm cutting this seam mainly to help me position the next piece of fabric. It doesn't have to be perfect.

My next piece of fabric will go here. That line is going to help me position this. I drop that down. Now I am going to try with no pins and see how that works. I'll sew 1 to 2 stitches before that line. I'll sew all the way across. I'll fold that back. I'll take this over to the pressing area because I want to make sure that everything is nice and flat before I put the last two pieces on.

Here's my pressed piece. I've cut these strips ahead of time. This more than enough covers that but remember you are going to cover all the way out to this dashed line. Fold this down. This is when your piece really starts looking like the block. This is where it is going to go. Let's put right sides together. I can pin it but I think I can put that right under there.

When I sew this, I want to start past the dashed lines. While I am sewing on that black line I want to make sure I am really hitting these corners here. I don't want to chop them off. I want to be real careful to stay on that black line as I sew over those corners because that's going to determine if my corners are crisp. I'll sew past the dashed line. Pull that out. Fold that back and you can see nice corners there.

I know that this piece is big enough to cover. I'll start sewing. I am going to trim and then fold that back. There I have my Flying Geese unit. Let me take this over to the pressing board to get it nice and flat before we cut it.

Here's my completed block that's been pressed. I'm ready to cut that. I can cut with a scissors but I usually like to use my rotary cutter. If I am putting it in a frame like this, I'll use this excess to wrap around the cardboard cutout in there to make it easier to get that in that frame.

Here's my completed square. For more information about paper piecing, visit **LearnHowToQuilt.com**. Click on **Beginner Basics** and go to **Paper Piecing**.