

## CRAZY QUILTING LESSON CHALLENGE - LESSON TWO

You should have your “naked” block finished by now and be ready to start with the “fun stuff”.....embellishing it! Yeahhhhh!

So, are you ready to try some stitching?? Well, before we start, I have an assignment for you. It isn't required, but everyone that does it will be included in an additional prize drawing for this lesson.

Sharon Boggon recommends making a sampler strip to keep with your stitching supplies. This is a good place to keep a record of stitches as you master them, combinations that you see somewhere and like and want to try, or those that you design yourself. Keeping it with your supplies makes it a handy reference when you are working on a project later and want to use the stitch. A very simple one is made by using 6 1/2" strips of fabric x the width of the fabric. Either cut two pieces this size out of one fabric or one of your chosen fabric and one of muslin as a backing. Both could, also, be of muslin, if you choose. If you would like to use up scraps, piece 2" x 7 or 8" long pieces together to make your strip. Once you have a 45" or so piece completed, trim it to 6 1/2" wide. Make a separate backing of muslin to match. Once you've decided on your fabric and have it cut, put the two pieces right sides and stitch around the entire piece with a 1/4" seam allowance leaving a small opening so that you can turn the piece right side out. Before turning it, clip off the corners to reduce bulk. Once turned, use a pointed object, like a knitting needle, to push out the corners. Press the piece and turn under and whip stitch the opening closed. To keep the edges crisp, top stitch 1/8" around the entire piece. If you would like to roll the sampler up to store it with your stitching supplies, either add a ribbon to each end or use Velcro.

Another option, would be to make a few sampler blocks like the one that Nickilee posted on the site with fabric strips and the fan or use blocks that you have made out of assorted strips. You could make a couple to start and then make additional ones as needed. These blocks could be bound or finished using the methods above. To keep them together and organized and have the ability to add more blocks, a large eyelet could be added to one corner and they could be kept together with a snap ring or ribbon. Three eyelets on one side would keep them together like a book.... Just tie them with ribbon on one side.

Whatever works for you to keep a physical record of stitches is fine. Here is a sample of a couple that I made. One is fancier and the other just fabric that I bound. I suggest drawing lines on the one that is plain fabric to represent seams. You can use pencil that will eventually wear or wash away, you can mark it each time with disappearing marker or the blue marker that disappears with water, or don't worry if it stays and use a permanent marker. The lines give a good guide for making your stitches.



With this one, I drew lines in pencil to help keep my stitches in line.

I bound it with a lace binding. This type can just be rolled up and thrown in with your sewing supplies.



These are some “orphan” stip blocks that could be sewn together in a long strip or bound and kept individually. A suggestion would be to do this and then put an eyelet in one corner to thread with ribbon to keep them together.

I'm actually thinking of making one that is kind of a chatelaine to hang around your neck that will also hold a pair of scissors, have a felt piece for needles, a few extra pockets, and also work as your stitch sampler! This would be one way for me not to misplace it! If I get it done this week, I'll post a picture of it on the forum and send you all a picture to include with your lesson sheets.

Now that you have your “pre-stitch” assignment, let's see what creative method YOU come up with. Share a picture on Flickr.

NOW, let's get to the stitching.....

Supplies needed for this lesson are: a variety of types of thread; needles to fit the thread that you are using; possibly, a needle threader for regular or thin thread or a tapestry threader for thicker threads; and fabric to practice your stitches on. A hoop would be helpful to some, highly recommended by many experts, but not completely necessary. Let's cover each of these items:

**NEEDLES:** Each of the following needles will be needed at some point during the embellishment process of your crazy quilt block: sharps, embroidery, tapestry, milliner, darning, appliqué, chenille, and beading. (For this specific class, you will probably use the embroidery needles the most....possibly darning needle for fat threads.)



Here is a picture of a variety of needles that you will be using at some point.

**THREADS:** I started to say that any thread that you can get through the eye of a needle will work for crazy quilting, but that isn't true, as you can actually use thread that WON'T go through the eye of a needle! But, that's another lesson. For this class, you should be using thread that will go through the needle. I'd suggest that you start out with a 12 pearl cotton to try each stitch (or an 8 pearl cotton, if you prefer starting larger) and then be adventurous and experiment with others. If you can find a needle to accommodate the thread, you can test it on the stitches in this class to see your results with that particular thread. Try a variety of types and sizes. They can be solid or variegated...Some threads that you might want to try are: silk thread (not ribbon for this lesson), embroidery floss (DMC is a common one, pearl cotton, wool thread, rayon thread, a variety of textured threads, metallic threads, even thin yarns, or you can check out many online sites for a ton of choices from fuzzy threads to twisted threads : link thread sites:



Here are just a few of the many threads you might use:

**NEEDLE THREADERS:** I'm still able to thread a regular needle, but if you have trouble, I'd suggest either the old little aluminum threader or the fancy tabletop one by clover (see picture). These work well with regular thread, but when you get into the multi-strand threads, I use a tapestry threader. (see picture)



These needle threaders can save your eyes and help keep your patience level in tact. They are well worth the small investment that it takes to buy them.

**THREAD TREATMENTS:** Depending on the thread and the situation, wax or Thread Heaven can be used on thread. Wax will make the thread stay together and stiffen it, while Thread Heaven will keep the thread from tangling and will not stiffen it.

I, also, suggest that you get yourself a small pair of very sharp scissors. I have several. I have a small yellow handled pair that are made by Omnigrad that I love, as well as small Fiskar scissors. I, also, have a more expensive pair of gold handled Gingher scissors. All of them work. The most important thing is that they are comfortable to use and sharp. Another thing is to have a portable pincushion...I actually use my scrap catcher with pincushion on top of it on the arm of my chair.....works great!

Sharon Boggon and Judith Baker Montano have both taught that a person can make wonderful crazy quilts by mastering just a few basic stitches and then learning ways to vary and combine them into an unbelievable variety of beautiful seam treatments for their crazy quilt projects. Since Sharon Boggon has provided the most fantastic stitch tutorial dictionary online, I am not going to "reinvent the wheel" by trying to reconstruct one myself. Rather, I'm going to direct you to her site for tutorials of each stitch. I suggest that as you come to the link in this lesson, that you follow the link to her site and then copy and paste the directions, etc. for that lesson into a Word document and then save it. Name each page by whatever stitch it is. When you print the pages for this lesson, print those pages and you will have a complete printed reference for this lesson. I will be using this method of links in many of the future lessons, too.

The first stitch that you will learn is the buttonhole stitch, which many of you know already. This stitch is a plain, but very versatile stitch as you will see when we get to using it in combinations. [Link to BUTTONHOLE STITCH](#)

There are many variations of this stitch to try. She has listed them at the bottom of link above. Your challenge is to master the buttonhole stitch and to try doing each of the variations that she has listed and pick one to add to your block. My favorite is probably the Rosette of Thorns.

The second stitch for this lesson is the feather stitch. This stitch is a member of the buttonhole family, so was listed as a variation of it. It is one of the most loved and used stitches by crazy quilters and is especially wonderful used in underwater scenes. [Link to FEATHER STITCH](#)

Since this and the buttonhole stitch are related, all of the variations are the same.

Another very popular stitch is the herringbone stitch. You will probably use this stitch somewhere on every crazy quilt that you make. [Link to HERRINGBONE STITCH](#)

There are three variations of the Herringbone stitch listed. Try them all.

The Chevron stitch is very similar, but is different. It is also a popular crazy quilt stitch and one that is important to master for stitch combinations. [Link to CHEVRON STITCH](#)

The Cretan stitch is especially nice used to fill in leaf shapes, but works well as a stand alone decorative stitch or is wonderful used in combinations, too. [Link to CRETAN STITCH](#). This one shows using it for a leaf filler. Another link to a tutorial for this stitch is [Link to another CRETAN STITCH site](#) that shows it as a stand alone stitch.

The fly stitch is another very usable stitch that has several variations to experiment with. Try several of them. [Link to FLY STITCH](#)

The Chain Stitch has so many varieties! Look at them all and pick out a few to try. [Link to CHAIN STITCH](#)

The stem stitch looks easier than it is. The trick is to get a consistent, even, smooth stitch. It is one stitch you need to master. [Link to STEM STITCH](#)

The Straight Stitch is used a lot to make combinations. [Link to STRAIGHT STITCH](#). The Satin stitch is simply many straight stitches used together to work as a filler. [Link to SATIN STITCH](#)

The challenge for this lesson is:

1. Try each of these basic stitches using 3 different thicknesses of threads for each.
2. Try at least 2 variations of each that are listed for each stitch at the bottom of their links above.
3. Pick out 4 of your favorite stitches and use them on 4 of the seams of your CQ block.
4. Post pictures on Flickr of your samples and your block with the stitches added.

MAKE SURE TO HIGHLIGHT, COPY, AND PASTE INTO A WORD DOCUMENT EACH OF THE STITCH DIRECTIONS THAT THE LINKS BRING YOU TO. Add them to these sheets for a complete lesson.

There are also many great stitch books available to buy. A few of my favorites are "Elegant Stitches" by Judith Baker Montano and Carole Samples book, "Treasury of Crazy Quilt Stitches" that was out of print and selling for up to \$300 a copy, but has now been reprinted by AQS, so it's an ideal time to buy one for under 30.00.

DRAWINGS FOR THIS LESSON:

1. Make a sampler to keep a record of your stitches and post a picture of it on Flickr.....drawing for a variety of threads.
2. Post a picture of a sample of each stitch using 3 different thicknesses of Threads, plus 2 variations of each stitch.....drawing for my extra copy of Judith Baker Montano's book....."Elegant Stitches"
2. Post a picture of your block with 4 seams finished with 4 different Stitches.....a variety of needles and a tapestry threader.