

making 12 blocks
12 1/2" unfinished each

Las Vegas Quilters

Puzzle Block-A-Month

The Puzzle Block-A-Month is a 12-month project which illustrates the versatility and variability of a single traditional quilt block. Each month, we will piece the same St. George's Cross block but vary the position of the fabrics within the block, creating a different visual image each time. We hope that you will take this "lesson" to heart and begin to look beyond the given colorations of specific quilt blocks to create more original and personal versions of "the same old block."

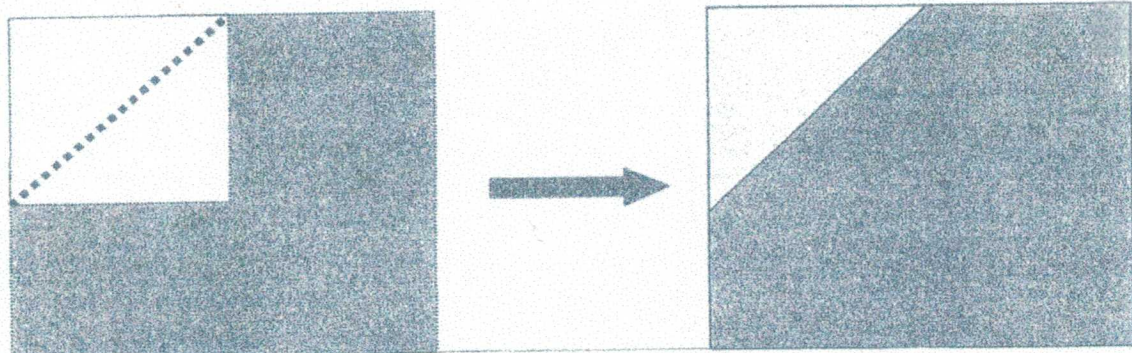
Requirements: 1 yard each of 4 fabrics. Note: This is sufficient fabric for **twelve 12" finished blocks** (they will be 12 1/2" including the seam allowances). Any sashing, borders or other setting options require additional fabrics and/or yardage.

Piecing Directions: These instructions are written for a simplified piecing technique which uses just squares and rectangles. There is some waste of fabric (the trimmed off triangles, as you will see) but the accuracy of the technique more than compensates for the waste, even for *this* thrifty Yankee. Reminder: these instructions are for **12" blocks** since that is usually considered "the standard" quilt block measurement.

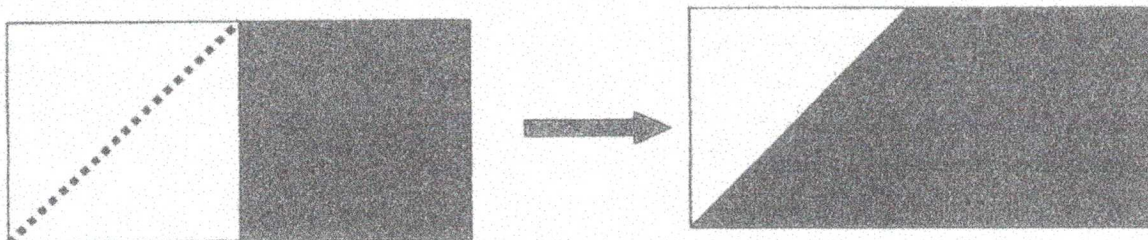
Note that the block is composed of 3 distinct sub-units: the center square, a square-in-a-square in each corner of the block and 8 flying geese.

Center Square: Cut a 4 1/2" square – that's easy enough!

Square-in-a-square: Start with a 4 1/2" square of the fabric in the center. On one corner of that square, place a 2 1/2" square of the appropriate fabric, right sides together and sew along the diagonal of the small square as illustrated below. Press the smaller square back along the sewn line, revealing the right side of the 2 1/2" fabric. Trim away the extra fabric underneath, leaving a 1/4" seam allowance. Repeat for the other 3 corners of the larger square.



Flying Geese: These units are pieced in a manner very similar to that used for the square-in-a-square unit, except you'll start with a $2\frac{1}{2}" \times 4\frac{1}{2}"$ rectangle of the center (or goose) fabric. Place a $2\frac{1}{2}"$ square of the appropriate ("sky") fabric, right sides together and sew along the diagonal as illustrated below. Press the smaller square back along the sewn line, revealing the right side of the $2\frac{1}{2}"$ fabric. Trim away the extra fabric underneath, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}"$ seam allowance. Repeat for the other corner of the rectangle.



Assemble the block according to the block diagram. Strive to maintain a consistent $\frac{1}{4}"$ seam allowance and perfectly matched points. Note that I said "strive" – it's always nice to have a goal, even if we don't quite get there!

Recommendations:

1. We suggest that you create a "swatch card" – designate your fabrics as #1, #2, etc. Label an index card with corresponding labels and glue a swatch of each fabric next to its appropriate label. This "cheat sheet" *really* helps to keep your fabric choices straight as you work on your project. It doesn't matter which fabrics you designate as fabric #1, fabric #2, etc. but as a point of reference, fabric #1 is the darkest fabric and fabric #2 is the lightest. No matter *how* you designate your fabrics, just be consistent; that's where the swatch card comes in handy.
2. Make your puzzle block every month and bring it to the next month's guild meeting so we can all admire it! Because everyone's block will look so different depending on fabric choices and how those fabrics were labeled, please bring in only the "appropriate" block to the guild meeting – that is, **bring block #1 in Dec, block #2 in Jan, etc.** That way, we will all benefit from the additional "lesson" of the significance of the placement of color value within a given block.

For those of you who may want to try making your blocks a different size, here are some alternative measurements:

9" Finished block – Center square and center of square-in-a-square are cut $3\frac{1}{2}"$. The flying geese rectangles are $2" \times 3\frac{1}{2}"$. The small squares are $2"$.

6" Finished block – Center square and center of square-in-a-square are cut $2\frac{1}{2}"$. The flying geese rectangles are $1\frac{1}{2}" \times 2\frac{1}{2}"$. The small squares are $1\frac{1}{2}"$.

Good Luck and have fun!

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