



INTRODUCTION TO CROSS STITCH

For the Beginning Stitcher to Earn the Girl Scouts of America Fiber Arts Badge.



PRESENTED BY THE FORT WORTH CHAPTER OF EMBROIDERERS' GUILD OF AMERICA
FortWorthEGA.com

2024

Requirements for the Fiber Arts Badge



Senior Girl Scouts earn The Fiber Arts badge by completing two projects: an ornament (as a gift) and a needlebook (as something useful).

This manual will teach you how to make an ornament and a needle book.

The Fort Worth Chapter of Embroiderers' Guild of America has supplied a kit that contains everything you need for these two projects. You'll also learn how to:

- Select fabric for cross stitching
- Read a cross stitch project chart
- Thread a needle
- Start your project
- Make cross stitches
- Change, or end, thread when stitching

Selecting Fabric for Cross Stitching

The kit for these two projects contains Aida fabric - a stiff cotton fabric with larger holes where the warp and woof cross. Aida is easy to find, inexpensive, and comes in various thread count sizes and colors. The usual sizes for Aida fabric are 14, 16, and 18 threads per inch of fabric. The greater the number of threads per inch, the smaller the design size will be.

Linen and Evenweave are two other types of fabric used for cross stitching. They are not as easily found in craft stores but are available from specialty needlework shops and online retailers.

Reading the Cross Stitch Project Chart

Cross Stich charts are made of symbols (representing the color of thread to use) on a grid (representing the warp and woof of the fabric).

- Each square on the grid equals one cross stitch.
- Heavier lines on the chart are usually every 10 counted spaces apart and are for helping the stitcher keep track of the stitch count.
- The center of the chart is marked for you – usually with a small arrow symbol.
- The chart is sized only for the stitching. Remember to add room to your fabric for finishing.
- Each color used will have its symbol – found in the Chart Key.
- Charts are available printed on paper or in electronic format.

Thread the Needle

There are several ways to thread the #24 tapestry needle in your kit:

- Poke one end of the thread through the eye the best you can.
- Use a needle threader to help guide the thread through the eye.
- Pinch a fold of thread and slide the eye of the needle onto the folded end.
- Roll the eye of the needle over the thread on your finger until thread works through the eye.

Start the Ornament: Valentine's Day (I Love You)

Items needed:



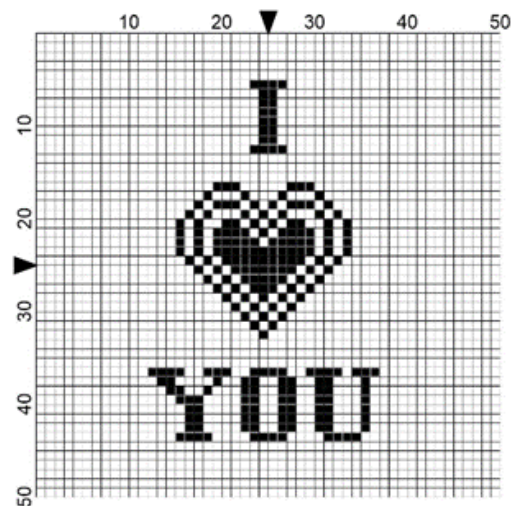
- Aida fabric – 14-count, cut in a 5-inch circle
- DMC floss for stitching (Example: red, number 321)
- #24 Tapestry/Cross Stitch Needle
- Heavy-duty sewing thread
- Felt – cut into a 3-inch round for backing the finished ornament
- Wooden or cardboard circle – 3-inches round
- Rick Rack – cut to a 12-inch length for finishing the ornament
- Scissors
- White glue

Thread the Needle for the “Loop Start” method

- Cut a length of DMC floss to about 36 inches.
- Separate 1 strand from the other 5 strands of floss
- Match the two ends of the 1 strand of floss together to make a loop.
- Thread the eye of the #24 Tapestry/Cross Stitch needle with the two ends of the floss. Pull the needle about 6 inches along the doubled-strand thread. Set the needle aside.

Find the Center of the Chart

The Holiday Ornament Chart is 50 stitches wide and 50 stitches long. The center of the chart is at 25 across and 25 down. Follow those mid-point chart lines to where they cross. This is where we will start stitching our project.



Find the Center of the Fabric

Fold the circle of Aida fabric in half, then in half again – matching up the curved edges. Pinch the point where the folds cross. Open the fabric and notice the location of the pinched intersection. This is the center of the chart.

Start Stitching

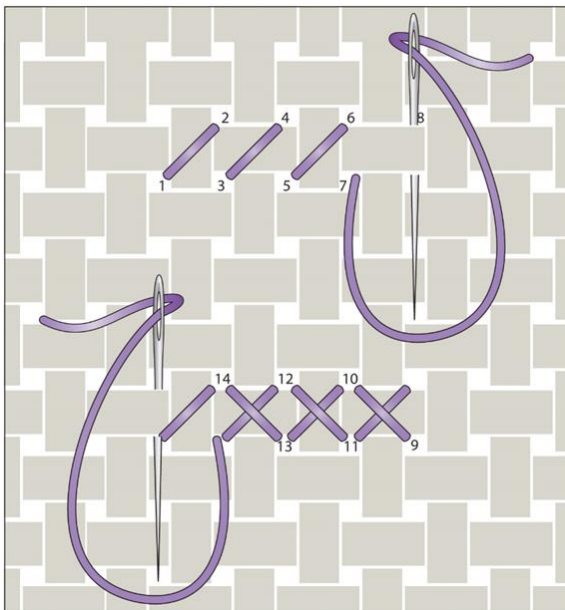


From the back of the fabric, bring the point of the threaded needle up through the lower left hole of the square in the center of the fabric.

Pull the DMC double strand up most of the way through the fabric but leave the loop in the back of the fabric.

Point the needle down through the upper right corner of that same "square" of aida fabric and through the loop on the backside. (Position 2 in the graphic.)

Pull the DMC taught and it will form a slip-knot in the back of the fabric and make half of the cross stitch on the front of the fabric.



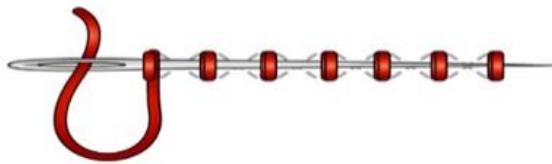
Continue making half-cross stitches for 4 more stitches. Now we will reverse direction and cross the stitches we just made.

Bring the needle up through the bottom right hole and down through the top left hole of the Aida fabric. (Position 10 in the graphic)

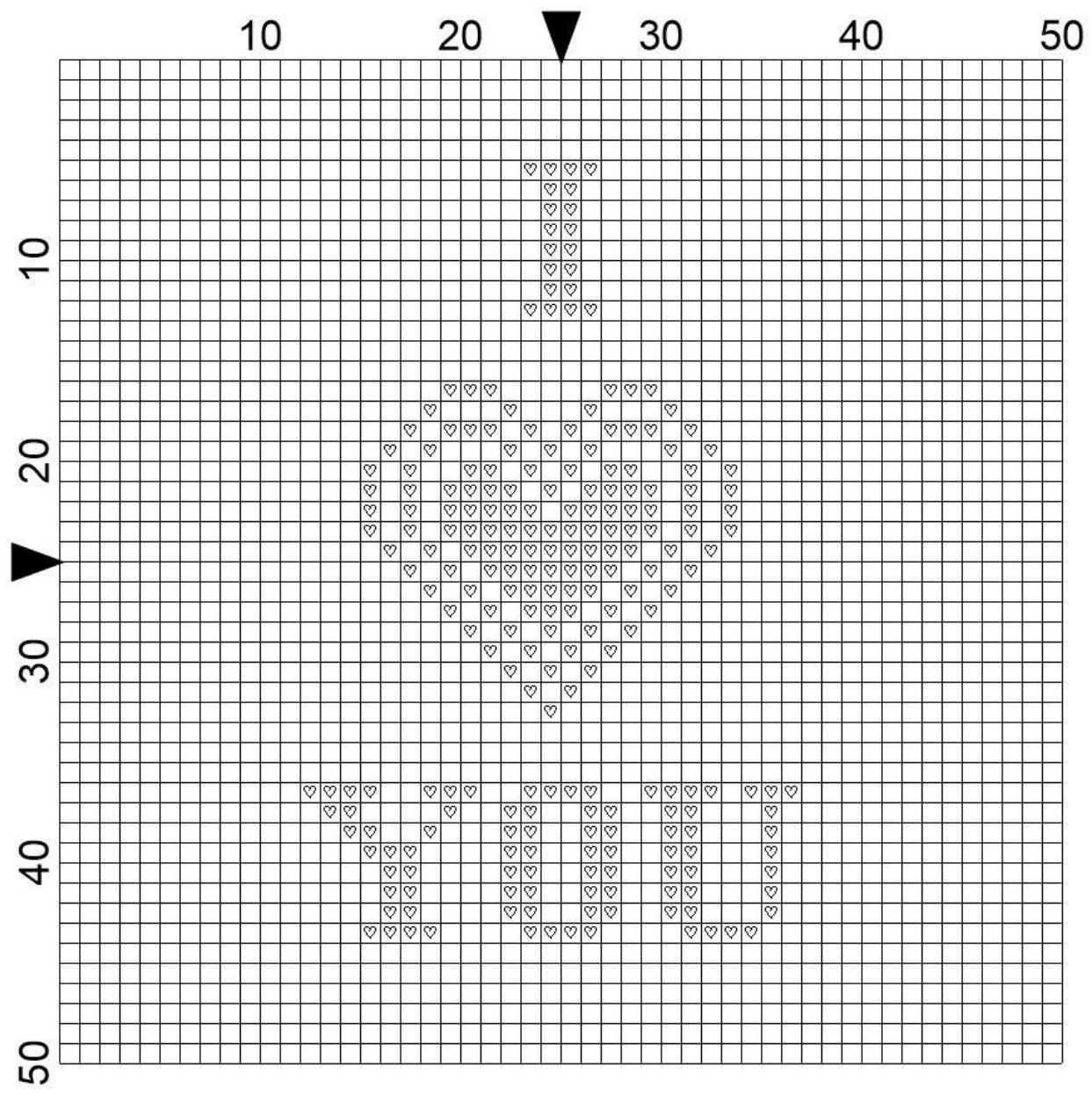
Continue across the line of half stitches until they are all crossed.

Then make the other half of the row of half cross stitches – 4 more – and come back and cross them. You should now have a row of 9 cross stitches that makes up the first, and middle, row of the heart design.

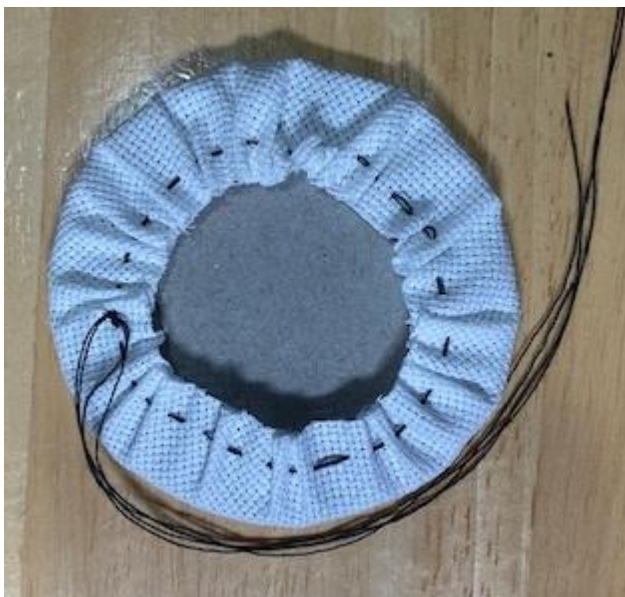
When the length of DMC is too short to continue stitching, run the needle under 3-4 stitches on the back of the fabric and snip the DMC close to the fabric/stitches.



Thread the needle again and continue until all the symbols in the chart are transferred as stitches onto the fabric.



Finishing the Ornament



Cut a 24-to-36-inch length of heavy-duty sewing thread and thread the Tapestry or Cross Stitch needle with it. Move the needle 4-6 inches along the thread and fold the tail end of the thread over to lie next to the other strand.

Place a 3-in wooden or cardboard circle on the back of the stitched piece. About an inch of fabric should extend past the round cardboard. Confirm that there is enough fabric to wrap around the disk and then set the disk aside until later. In this “extra” fabric near the outer edges of the aida, start a running stitch that allows gathering the edges of the Aida fabric around the circle. Start by taking a small stitch about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the fabric’s edge.

Leave a 4-inch “tail” extending from this first stitch. (You’ll use the tail to knot the gathering stitches together later.)

Work the needle through every $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inches around the Aida fabric and parallel to the fabric’s edge, basting in “gathering” stitches. Reinsert the disk when nearing the completion of the circle.

After working back to the beginning of the stitches, pull the gathering thread taught through the fabric – bringing the edges around the disk.

Take a moment to verify that the design is centered on the front of the ornament then tie the 2 ends of the heavy-duty thread together, keeping the gathered aida fabric taught around the disk.

Tack the rick rack to the back of the ornament – placing the zig-zag pattern where half extends past the edges of the ornament. Start and stop the circle of rick rack at the bottom of the ornament. Use a simple tacking stitch to attach the inner points of the rick rack to the aida fabric on the back of the ornament.

Make the cording that will be the hanger for the ornament.

1. Start making the cording by measuring and cutting two 36-inch lengths of DMC floss.
2. Fold the ends of one of the lengths together. Pinch between the thumb and forefinger of your non-dominant hand.





3. Hook the forefinger of your dominant hand through the loop of the floss.
4. Twirl (twist the DMC around itself) to make at least 75 turns of the loop.
5. Carefully transfer the looped end to the pinched end. The floss should twist onto itself and make cording. Smooth out the cording, if necessary, and tie the loop and loose ends together to make a simple knot.



Carefully glue the felt circle to the back of the ornament, covering the tacked edges of the rick rack and over the glued ends of the cording. Align the edges of the felt with the edges of the fabric covering the circle.

Needlebook

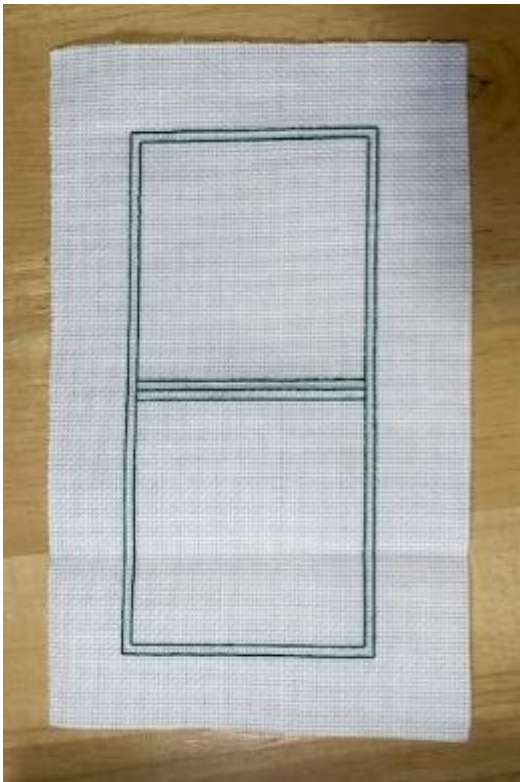
Items Needed:

- Aida Fabric – cut to an 8 x 5-inch rectangle (The fabric count and color can vary for this project.)
- DMC floss – both for stitching and making the cording
- Sewing Thread
- #24 Tapestry/Cross Stitch Needle
- 8 straight pins
- Needlebook lining fabric – cut to an 8 x 5-inch rectangle
- Felt insert to hold the needles – cut to a 5 x 2 ½ -inch rectangle
- Scissors

Thread the Needle – the loop method

Cut a length of DMC floss to about 36 inches. Use the Loop Method mentioned in the Ornament section to thread the needle.

Find the Starting Point



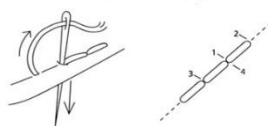
Stitch the outline of the needlebook first. Select a corner of the chart to start stitching. Find a starting point on the fabric that is 1 inch down and 1 inch across from a corner edge and begin stitching.

The chart is for a motif in the Quaker tradition of cross-stitched samplers. Notice that the chart for the Quaker motif is also on a 50 x 50 chart – like the Ornament project.

Backstitching

Solid lines on a chart represent backstitches. The needlebook project has 2 boundary rows in the design that are worked in backstitches.

To create a backstitch, start the stitch using the “loop method” learned in the Ornament project. Move the needle to the bottom of the next stitch in the chart and bring the needle up there. Move “back” to the first stitch and put the needle through the fabric at the bottom of that stitch – making a “line” of stitches. Continue in this way along the chart.



Stitch the needlebook

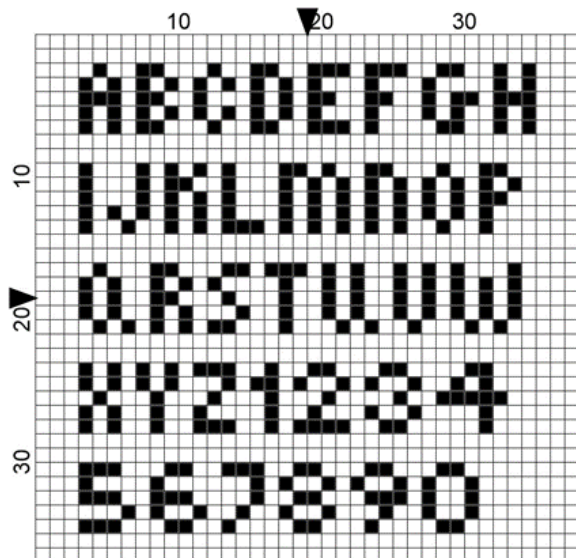
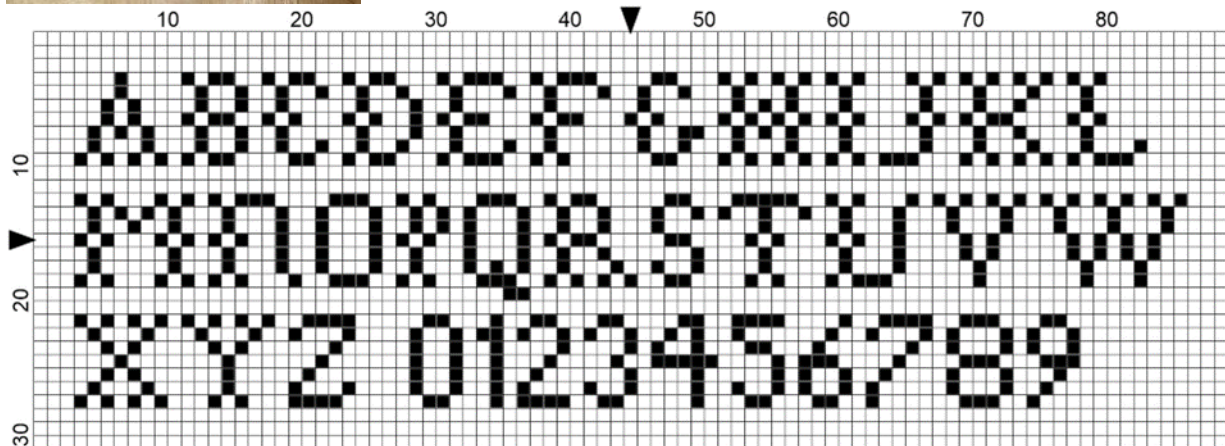


Replace the initials “DB” and the year in the needlebook chart with initials of your choice and the current year. There are alphabet and numeric charts below.

The back of the needlebook may be personalized in any manner. The sample chart includes a GS Troop number and the name “Debra” as examples.

Practice on simple graph paper to chart your own design or personalization. Remember that the chart area is 50 stitches (squares) wide by 50 stitches (squares) long.

The chart below shows letters and numbers for inside of the Quaker motif on the front of the needlebook.



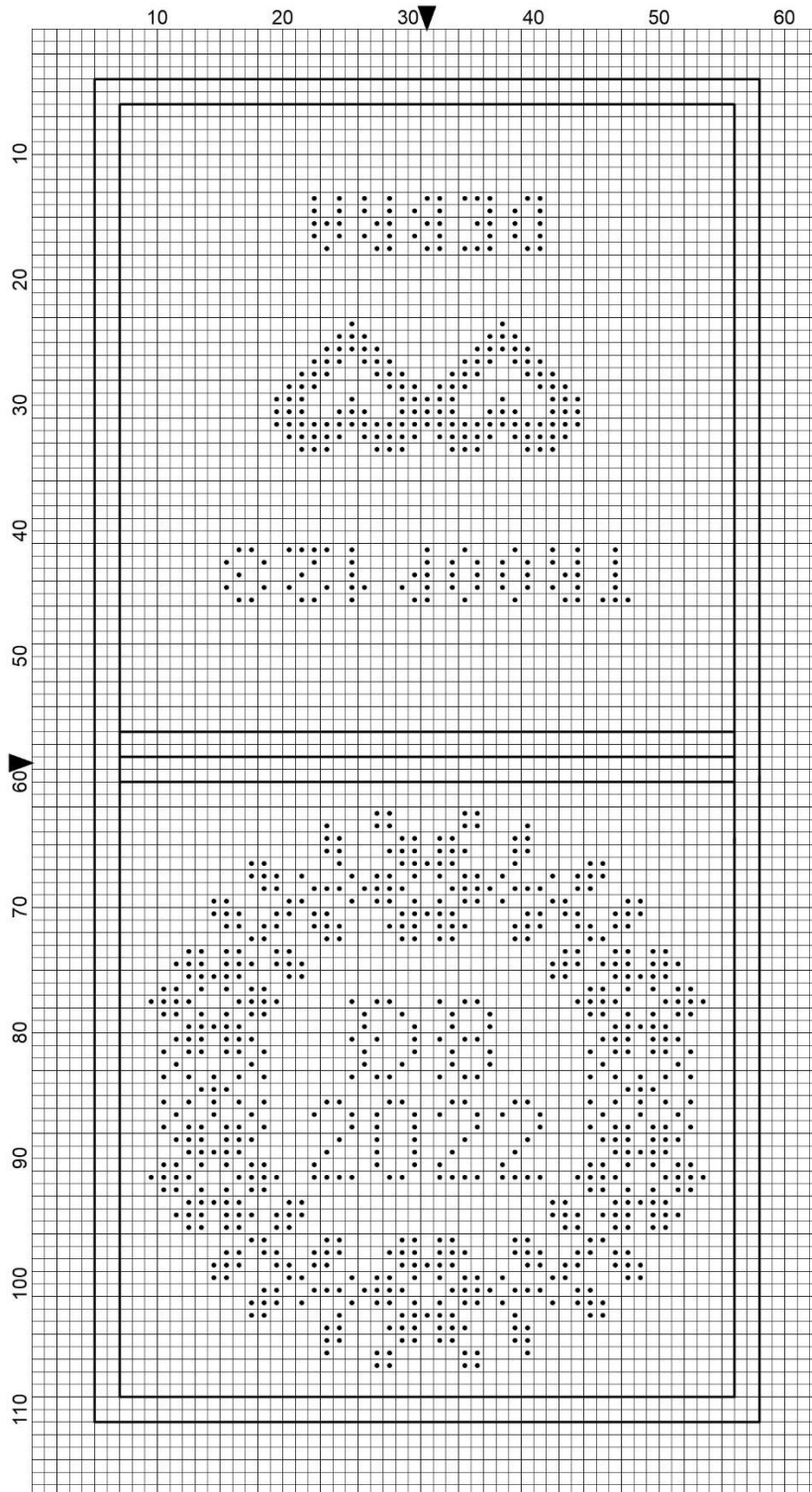
This chart contains letters and numbers that fit the back of the needle book.

Centering the design vertically is a math effort. Each line of letters on the chart are 5 stitches high. Place 3 stitches between words and 5 stitches between rows. Add the number of rows + the spaces between rows and then subtract that number from 50. Divide this number in half to know how many rows from the top border to begin stitching.

The horizontal center of each row is at stitch 25.

Needlebook Chart

Begin stitching the chart at any corner – 1 inch from the edge of the fabric’s top and side edges. Stitch the outline first, then the motif. Center the initials and the year in the middle of the motif. Personalize the back of the needlebook in any way you wish.



Finishing the Needlebook



Fold the edges of the Aida fabric toward the back of the stitched piece. “Finger press” (pinch tightly between your thumb and forefinger) a fold line that is one line of fabric threads away from the backstitched outer border.

Do not fold directly on the line of stitching. You’ll need room to stitch the lining fabric to the aida fabric.

Miter the corners to reduce the bulkiness of the fabric.

To miter a corner:

1. Fold the fabric along the outside edges of the stitching.
2. Finger-press the fabric to make a crease.
3. With the long edge of the fabric opened and the short edge folded, turn the folded edge down to make a 45-degree angle (where the folded edge of the short side fold is even with the fold line of the long edge).
4. Then fold the long edge of the fabric along the fold line where the 45-degree triangle is tucked inside the fold. (See photos)



Use one of the straight pins to hold the fold in place.

Fold the lining fabric to match the size of the folded stitched aida fabric.

Miter the corners in the same way as above – except fold the 45-angle toward the short edge of the fabric. This has the folded bulk tucked in the opposite direction as the stitched fabric.



Assemble the needle book by placing the two fabrics together with the folds and edges on the inside – also called “wrong sides together”. Work the corners to where the points meet neatly and the folds of the 45-degree tucks meet up together but do not overlap. Move the straight pins to hold the two fabrics together, especially at the corners.



Thread the needle with a 12-inch length of sewing thread. Pull the needle along about 4 inches and double the thread back onto the longer tail. It appears that the thread is doubled, but only 1 strand of thread will be used to sew the lining fabric to the aida.

“Hide the tail” of the thread by running the needle about an inch under the fold of the lining fabric. When the thread is pulled through, leave the last inch of thread inside the fold but don’t leave the end hanging out of the fabric. The example picture shows black thread for better visibility, but you will use a matching color thread.



Start the slip stitching by taking a small tuck of Aida fabric along the long side with the needle. Using the row of Aida thread between “squares” of fabric is helpful to keep an even stitching row and for ease of catching the fabric with the needle for the stitch.

Push the needle straight across and through the lining fabric – catching a small amount of the folded edge fabric each time. Pull the needle and all the thread through the fabric. Be careful not to pull the “tail” out of the folded inside of the lining fabric.



Continue slip stitching the long side of the needle book. Stop when you reach the other corner and end by taking 2-3 stitches in the same place and then run the needle back through the folded lining fabric for about an inch. Pull the thread through and snip close to the fabric – careful NOT to cut either the fabric or the slip stitching.

Make two lengths of cording to tie the needle book closed. Refer to the Ornament instructions for how to make cording.

Find the center of one of the short ends of the needle book.



Tuck the knotted end of one piece of cording between the lining fabric and the aida fabric, leaving almost all of the cording hanging out from the needlebook. Secure in place with a straight pin.

Begin slip stitching the short end of the needlebook at the corner in the same manner used to stitch the long ends together.

At the center of the short end with the cording pinned in place, take 2-3 stitches through the cording as the Aida and lining fabric are stitched together. Pass the needle to the other side of the cording and take 2-3 more stitches to secure the cording in place.

Continue slip stitching the lining to the aida to the other corner. End off.

Repeat this process for the other side of the needle book.



Attaching the Felt Insert

Attach the felt insert to the needle book using 1 strand of DMC floss.



Start with the loop method, passing the needle from the inside of the needle book, first through the felt insert and then through all layers of the book – coming up in the stitching on the center fold of the design.

Continue stitching the felt insert to the needle book using back stitches (as used in the border stitching) along the center line of stitching along the “spine” of the book.

Be careful to keep the needle straight and perpendicular to the fabric while stitching the felt insert. Stitching at an angle will cause the felt insert to not lay straight when the book is opened.

End in the same manner used for slip stitching – take a couple of stitches in the same place and then run the needle under the fabric for about an inch and snip the excess thread close to the fabric. The cording will safely tie the needle book closed to store pins and needles.

