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## **Sew a Christmas Tree Skirt Using EZ Quilting Templates** with Leslie Schucker

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### **Chapter 1 - Sew a Christmas Tree Skirt Using EZ Quilting Templates**

#### Overview

(upbeat music) - Hi, I'm Leslie Schucker. I've been stitching nearly my whole life. My grandmother taught me to sew when I was a little girl, and some of my most prized possessions are quilts and afghans that she passed down to me. I'm gonna show you how to make a tree skirt. We're going to use wool felt, which is really durable, and of a quality that you can pass down from generation to generation. We're gonna use an EZ Quilting template to cut out some fun shapes that will decorate your tree skirt. It seems like a big project, but it only takes a few simple steps to create a really beautiful, lasting heirloom. (upbeat music)

#### Materials

- The materials you will need are eight rolls of 18 by 24 white wool felt. And then four colors of 12 by 12 sheets of wool felt. Jumbo ricrac. The mini-hexagon easy quilting template. Grosgrain ribbon. Double-fold bias tape. Embroidery thread. Two colors of coordinating buttons. Some sewing needles and straight pins. A rotary cutter and scissors. A clear cutting ruler and a cutting mat. The pattern you've printed out from the class PDF, all taped and pieced together. A sewing machine with coordinating thread and a walking foot attachment.

#### Cut fabric and embellish

- The tree skirt is made of eight panels that are assembled exactly the same, so we'll show you how to do one, and you just repeat the same steps for all eight panels. Take your white wool felt, unroll it, and you're gonna press it with an iron so it's nice and flat. Then you'll take your assembled template and print it out and line it up with the bottom line of your wool, and using your nice straight cutting ruler, you're gonna place the ruler along one side, and cut the pieces out with a rotary cutter. Wool felt is thick, so sometimes it takes more than one pass. We'll do the same to the other side. Make sure your template is still lined up at the bottom. Lay your ruler back on. And one more cut along the top edge. Feel free to turn your cutting mat so it's more comfortable. And there's your first piece. Take your colored pieces and your cutting ruler, and we're gonna line up the ruler at the two and a half inch mark. And cut with your rotary cutter. You'll do that for the whole 12 by 12 piece in every color. Now we've cut all this strips, and we're gonna use the hexagon template to cut out the pieces. So you place your hexagon so that you have two sides even with your two and a half inch strip, and you cut off the first two angles. Flip your strip. And cut the other two sides. And you'll just do this all the way down the strip. Line up the two ends, and cut your angles. Continue cutting all your strips. You'll need 16 red hexagons, along with eight of the other three colors. Grab your first white panel, and we're gonna begin laying out the hexagons. You'll want to lay them so that the point side is up and down and your flat sides meet, and I lay them out approximately an inch and a half from the bottom. I kind of just use my finger as a guide so that I have them all on the same plane. And then we'll pin them in place. We're gonna hand sew the hexagons down, so pre-thread your needles, and we're gonna use one ply of matching thread. We're gonna just do a really simple applique stitch. You're gonna come up through both your layers, and go down. Your stitch will be about a quarter inch apart. You're gonna go down along the edge, back up onto your colored piece. And this is basically just a little applique stitch. Continue that

stitch all the way around your hexagon. Tie a knot and anchor it down by holding it tight with your finger. For the next color, we're going to attach the two hexes together, because you don't want to have that white gap showing. You're gonna come up through the red, and then down into the turquoise. And you're just gonna keep anchoring them down between the two hexagons. This prevents that white gap from forming between the two pieces. You'll just continue around the hexie, tacking it down like you did the first one. Anchor your last knot on the back. Take out all your pins. Let's start embellishing with buttons. So grab your buttons, and we're gonna just use three and put them on the middle three patches. We're gonna use alternate colors, so we'll put turquoise ones on the red, and we'll put a red one on the middle mint green, and then we'll sew them down with six-ply embroidery thread. I'm gonna use turquoise thread on the red button and red thread on the mint buttons. On two-hole buttons, you're just gonna come up through one hole, down through the other, and then anchor that on the back. On the four-hole buttons, you're gonna do an X. Do a diagonal. Drop down to the hole below, and do the opposite diagonal. Turn around and anchor it on the back. You'll want to keep the buttons in the center of your hexes. And that's how you apply the buttons.

#### Assemble panels

- Once you have all eight panels embellished, it's time to start assembling your tree skirt. We're gonna use buttonhole stitch because it's a little bit more of a decorative stitch than just whip stitching the panels together. We're gonna begin by pinning the two panels together. Just use your straight pins, and go down the long side of the panel. This will just help hold them in place, so they don't slide around for you. And grab your needle, and it's threaded with six ply of the natural-colored embroidery thread. And we're gonna begin to do a buttonhole stitch. To do the buttonhole stitch, you're gonna come up between your two layers, right along the edge. And then, you'll go in about a quarter inch, out through both layers, and then pull your thread through the loop. It creates a little square, And you're just gonna keep doing that all the way down. Through both layers, you pull the needle through the little loop that it creates, and it creates the little 90-degree angle. When you get to the end of your thread and you need to anchor it, you'll just anchor it through one of the layers, pull it around, and again I make a little knot and pull it tight. Cut it off. It kinda disappears into the wool. You're gonna come up just where the last 90-degree angle of your last stitch was. Pull your thread up through, and just continue on your stitches. To make the last stitch, you're just gonna come up to the end and do the exact same thing. Loop around, and you're just gonna do a little knot between the two layers, pulling it around the thread. And anchor your thread down. Remove your pins. And then trim your threads. The buttonhole stitch gives you a nice straight line down the center of the seam. You'll want to complete one, two, three, four, five, six more seams, but leave the last seam opened.

#### Finish Edges

- The next step is to add your bias tape. The reason we're gonna put bias tape around the center hole is it just helps hold the whole tree skirt together. You're not just relying on your little embroidery stitches, but it helps act as a binding. You'll first open up the binding, placing the one edge right along the inside circle of the tree skirt. You'll wanna leave about an inch or so overlap. And then you'll pin this in place. As you're going around the circle, you kind of have to twist it or bend it a little so it follows the circle. And because it's bias tape, it does stretch and bend. When you get to the end, you'll wanna cut your tape off, but leave, again, about an inch. Now take it over to

your sewing machine and you're just gonna use a regular straight stitch and you're gonna sew right along the fold of the first seam. It's a lot of bulk, so you just have to take your time and work your way around the curve. You'll just wanna backstitch a few stitches right at the end. So take it out of your machine and now we'll finish it by hand. You're gonna wanna fold it back around so that the bias tape goes to the backside of the tree skirt. You're gonna trim your ends so you have maybe 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch on the end and you're gonna tuck that under. Grab a needle with some red sewing thread, tuck your bias under, and you're basically just gonna tack this down. So you're gonna come up and come through both layers of your bias. I'm gonna flip this over to make it a little easier for me. As you're doing your tacking stitches, you're not going all the way through the layer of the wool. You're just kind of catching the wool and then attaching it to the very bottom of the bias tape. You just don't wanna see your stitches through the front. I'm gonna tack up the outside edge as well. It's just taking tiny stitches to close that open seam. And we'll flip it around and do the other side. And tack it off. Grab your rickrack and pins and let's finish the bottom of the tree skirt. You wanna lay your rickrack so it's just above the bottom edge of the tree skirt, and leave about an inch or so on the outside in the opening. And you'll pin this all the way around, just keeping it right along, lining up with the bottom edge. You're gonna help it go around the curve just by forcing it to go on a little bit of a curve. When you get to the end, you'll want to leave about another inch to fold under and trim. Let's take the tree skirt to the machine and sew on the binding. You're just using a regular straight stitch. And I'm using a walking foot just because of the thickness of the wool and the rickrack. I'm gonna start a little forward and do a few backstitches just to get it started. When you get to the end, you wanna make sure you fold your rickrack over the back so you're tacking the end around the back. To finish off your tree skirt, you're gonna make the ties. You'll need your grosgrain ribbon, your four buttons, embroidery thread, a sewing needle, and some straight pins. You're gonna start with your 44 inch piece of grosgrain ribbon. You're gonna fold it in half and cut it and fold it in half again and cut it. And you'll end up with four pieces. Now, we'll take our six ply embroidery thread and a button, and we're going to attach it to our tree skirt. And I'll generally just measure like a hand's distance down. Fold your ribbon over just a little bit. Come up through all the layers. You're gonna go through one hole in your button, down through the other hole in your button, back through all the layers. And because you're gonna use this as a tie, I'm gonna go through the holes twice, just to anchor it a little more solidly. Turn it over and anchor it with a knot. You're gonna take another piece of ribbon, and probably have another hand's distance down, fold it over. And you're gonna just do the same thing. Come up through all the layers and add your button down through the other hole, turn it over and knot it. You're gonna do the same thing on the other side. Just match it up to the same point of your other tie. See how easy that was? We didn't even use a ruler. I also have another version that if you enjoy hand sewing, you can make the complete tree skirt by hand. You can see along the edge, I moved the rickrack down a little and I hand sewed along the top edge. You can see on the back, I hand sewed the rickrack along the top. And I did also hand stitch the binding on as well. I really love these colors, but it's a really easy project to switch out the colors to match your own home decor.