
Release the Geese Mini Quilt Top with Sarah Bond

Chapter 1 - Release the Geese Mini Quilt Top

Overview

(bright music) - Welcome, quilters and makers. Welcome to Mini Release the Geese. My name is Sarah Bond. I'm a longtime quilter. I love traditional quilt forms and I like to take those quilt forms and give them a little bit of a modern spin. I love to take something that seems complicated, maybe it seems a little bit intricate, and break that down into the pieces, into the steps so that you can then take those steps and turn them into your own quilt. We're gonna be focusing on flying geese. These flying geese are small, and these flying geese are flying in a circle. We're gonna be using foundation paper piecing to get those nice points and those nice curves, and we are gonna end up with a beautiful quilt with row upon row upon row of spinning flying geese. (bright music)

Materials

- Let's talk about the materials for Release the Geese Mini Quilt. This quilt is well suited for certain types of precuts, and what I mean by that is that you can find fabric that's already been cut into strips. That's called a jelly roll. Here's another one. You can find your fabric cut into fat quarters, which means that's a square about 18" by 22". Or you can use yardage, whatever it is you have that you like. You can go with solids. I particularly do like solids, or you can go with prints. There's really any number of things that you can do with this quilt in terms of your fabric. You'll need your rotary cutting mat and your rotary cutters. I like to use two different rotary cutters or at least have them available. The larger one is good for cutting large swaths of fabric. The smaller one is good for small curves. If you need to run around a curve, it's a little bit easier to do with a smaller rotary cutter. I always like to have a good pair of shears. These are metal ones, but there are lots of different kinds out there that people like, and I always wanna have a seam ripper. So I've been quilting for a long, long time, and I think there's probably some people who have been quilting for 40 years who no longer make the kinds of mistakes that make this my best friend. I am constantly sewing things on backwards, upside down. I think it's because I'm talking while I'm sewing, but whatever it is, these two items are my best friend, because I don't have to be perfect. They can help me work through whatever mistakes I have and then I can just move on. So here, you can see I have two. This one is a traditional seam ripper, but this is really my favorite. This is a, actually an eyebrow trimmer, and I find that it's really useful, because you have this nice blade here, but it's wrapped so you can't hurt yourself and you can't hurt the fabric. It's a great tool for me. It's my favorite seam ripping tool. In addition to seam ripper, a lot of people will do pressing at your sewing station with some sort of device. People sometimes like to use a bone folder or a hera marker. This happens to be my favorite. It's a very low tech tool. It's just a bottle cap off of your water. This one happens to be from an elegant Italian soda water, and I like it because it's white, so I won't have any transfer of color to the fabric. And it also has a little embossed design on there that gives a little bit of extra friction to make that crease lay down. I also use pins. I'm not a very prolific pin user, because I've had some unfortunate accidents with running over pins with my sewing machine. So mostly, you will see me using a minimum number of pins. That's just my personal preference. If you are a pin user and have good pin karma, use as many as you want. But I'm gonna show you how I use the tools. In addition to pins, seam rippers, scissors, and such, you will need an iron. Generally, I will finger press or press with a pressing tool in between my additions of fabric, but then I do like to come and give the whole

piece a good press with a hot iron. Some people like to use steam, some people like to use a dry iron. Again, that's your preference. You'll also need a ruler to go with your rotary cutter. With this particular project, we're not gonna need a really big ruler. You can use the big one, but I have a small one here, because we're not cutting really big pieces of fabric. You'll need thread and a sewing machine. I generally like to piece with neutral gray, because that way, I don't have to think too hard and when I switch from color to color. You can see here that I do like color and so I use a lot of different shades. And rather than trying to match my thread color to the fabric, I just usually go with a medium gray. It works well with lights and darks and middle tones, so that works well for me. Lastly, you'll need your pattern, which is available in the class PDF. You'll need to print that out and be ready to start your paper piecing.

Cut fabric and pattern

- When I work on the mini Release the Geese, I always pre-cut my pieces. It makes it a little bit easier for me to put the quilt together and to make sure that I have the right size and shape to cover the portion of the pattern that I need to cover. I'm gonna be using a jelly roll. I have here some pieces that's in blues and greens. So I'm gonna go ahead and unroll this and prep to cut those pieces. This jelly roll has already been used. I've pulled some of the colors out of this already. So I'm gonna go ahead and open it up and take a look at what I have to work with. So I wanna unroll this and just lay it out so I can see which colors I'd like to use. I'm gonna go with the blues, some of the blues that I have here. Again, a jelly roll is a roll of strips and they're all cut at two and a half inches wide. This is really convenient for us with this quilt because we are going to be cutting our pieces from a two and a half inch wide strip. I'm gonna take just a few. I'm gonna layer some of them up and figure out which ones I want to work with. And I am going to be cutting my geese first. So the geese are triangular units and I'm gonna be cutting those from a square that's two and a half inches square. So I have my ruler here, which is a three inch ruler. I'm just going to even up the edge because on the selvages, you know, you get those bits that have those perforations. You don't wanna put them in your quilt. So I'm gonna put my selvedge over there and then I'm gonna go ahead and just cut some two and a half inch squares. Again, nice and easy for me because these jelly rolls are already cut in two and a half inch strips. So there's my nice little squares. And then I'm gonna come back on those squares and I'm gonna cut them into triangles by cutting diagonally from one corner to the other. So you can see that's giving me some nice little triangles and that is what I'm going to use for my geese. So in addition to the geese, I need to cut pieces for the spaces between the geese. Sometimes people will call those the sky. Sometimes people will call them the background. You can choose to set this up any way you want. You might wanna have a different background with each round on the Release the Geese or you might want to use one background for the whole circle so that all of the geese are flying on the same background. I'm gonna use a single background for this example and I'm gonna choose this cream color and that way those colors will stand out nicely against the background and they'll all be flying in unison on the same color. All right, so I'm going to go ahead and cut my strip from the background here. I'm just gonna fold it so it's a little bit easier to manage with the smaller ruler and I'm gonna cut a two inch strip. I'm gonna cut my wedges for the background from this two inch strip. Now you'll notice when you start to do this piecing that the size of the wedges on the outside of the curve versus the wedges on the inside of the curve are slightly different sizes. I just cut the same piece to go in both places because this is the mini quilt, you're not gonna have a whole lot of problems with coverage because the spaces that you are covering are small. So it's not gonna tax you in terms of getting those

pieces to fit when you are doing your piecing. The wedges will be a half an inch wide on the top and about two inches wide on the bottom. I have my strip here of two inches wide. I have a couple of layers here. You can cut, you know, up to maybe four layers depending on whether you're good about keeping your blade sharp or not. And I'm going to go ahead and get my first angle there. Okay, push that to the side. And now when I come in to do this wedge, I'm gonna measure it on my ruler. I know that this is at an angle so it's probably not exactly that two inches. But since this is just a rough cut, it doesn't have to be exact. We're just cutting these pieces so that they can be, you know, the right size and shape to fit in these spaces that we're gonna be paper piecing. I'm gonna go and cut that guy right there. And then I'm gonna swing my ruler the other way. I'm gonna measure that half inch right down there and my two inches-ish. Everything is sort of ish. Up top. And this, I love this method because I don't have waste. The truth is I have so much fabric that I could waste it from now until the end of my natural life and still have plenty of fabric. But there's still this little voice, probably my mother, wanting me to save fabric. So I like it when I can have some economy in terms of my cutting so that I don't have a lot of waste. The other thing is that then I don't have a bunch of little pieces left that I then have to decide whether they're big enough to save. And then you end up with the big bin full of the little scraps and you never do anything with them. So I like to keep it a little bit simple by having as little waste as possible when I'm cutting. Once I've finished cutting the wedges for the background, you can see that we have our geese of various colors. And we have our background pieces or our sky. Those are gonna go in sort of like that. Now you might be wondering how many of these things should I be cutting? This is a great question. I am generally an experiential quilter, I guess. I like to cut them and sort of look at all of the colors and then I use up the pieces and then I cut some more. Over here I have a lot of other geese that are gonna go together with these fellas. I did count how many geese there are altogether. There are 268 geese in your mini quilt. And there will be twice as many of your sky pieces. So you can do the math on that one. If you have a particular plan in terms of the colors that you wanna use or maybe a sequence of colors, if you have a pattern that you want to figure out how many pieces you need to cut, you can go ahead and do that. Or you can be like me and just cut a bunch of them and run out of them and then cut some more until you get to the end. Here are all of our pieces and now let's talk about the patterns. Your patterns are all together on this large sheet. You're gonna need to cut them apart. And I usually do that with my rotary cutter. If you have paper scissors, you can do that. Often people will ask me, well, doesn't the paper dull the blade? And I don't know, maybe it does, but I cut so much fabric that dulls the blade also. I just put another blade in because it's quicker for me that way. So I'm gonna go ahead and do this cutting. I find that I like to cut and leave an area around the solid black. We're going to trim on the solid black line after we have paper pieced. So I like to leave a little space and then I can get a nice clean trim on that. So I'm gonna go ahead and cut my pieces. Let me pull that out so I don't cut that by accident. It's sort of a balance between how much you leave around your piece and how much you take out so that it's a little bit easier to handle. I don't like to leave too much paper because it sort of gets in the way. It compromises your visibility when you're placing your pieces. So I like to sort of keep it clean. So for each quarter, I'm going to need six of these. Geese are directional. So when you're choosing your pattern and thinking about your fabric, you probably want to think about whether you're particular about which direction the geese are going, whether they're going clockwise or whether they're going counterclockwise, and incorporate that into your planning when you're doing your cutting. Once you get the rest of your pieces cut out, then we're ready to move forward to paper piecing the mini Release the Geese.

Paper piece the flying geese arcs

- Our fabric is cut and our patterns are cut down, and we're ready to start with our paper piecing. We will be sewing on the side of the pattern that has the printed lines on it. We have six different tiers here, and we have, in this case, chosen to have all of our geese going in the same direction. If you want to have a little different kind of movement in your quilt, you may wanna choose to change the directionality of those geese as you go along. I just wanna say that you wanna make sure that you look at your pattern and that you are choosing the right one. It's very easy to pick the wrong one, and to do all the paper piecing and then realize it's not going in the direction that you wanted it to go, and then you're mad. So my advice is just to take a look at that before you get started and make sure that you have them going in the right direction. We will be pressing as we go along, and when we're finished, we're gonna trim on your solid black line, and then we will join these tiers together, sewing those curves between each round. These are the pieces that will be going in between the background or the sky. Geese are directional. One of the things that comes into play with that directionality is that you need to start piecing your arc from the end that has the flat end of the goose. You can't start piecing on the pointy end of the goose. It will not work. So whatever direction you have chosen, you have to make sure that you're starting your piecing on the flat end of the goose. Let's pull out the machine and get started with paper piecing. You can piece in any order that you want. I'm going to start here with the smallest arc, which is gonna have four geese on it. As I mentioned, you always wanna start piecing from the base end of the goose. So I need a goose. I'm gonna grab one from over here, and I'm gonna lay this behind my pattern. Now I can see just from the light coming through that I have plenty of room on the other side of my sewing line. So now I'm going to take a piece of the background. So let's flip over here and look at this for a minute. Sometimes when I need to get myself oriented, I will flip over to this side and see what's going on, but then I'm gonna take it back to the other side when I do my sewing. So what's gonna happen here is my sky piece, I'm gonna sew along this line, and then this is gonna flip out to cover the wedge portion of the pattern. So bringing that back to this side, I'm gonna have these two pieces lined up. I'm going to put them behind the pattern, and then I'm going to sew on this line down towards the nose of the goose. I'm gonna sew down here and then I'm going to give myself a couple more stitches past the nose of the goose and that will become clear why that's helpful. All right, so I feel confident about how this is placed. So, I wanna go ahead and put this under the needle of my machine. I wanna sew from all the way from the solid black line. I'm gonna take a few stitches, and then I'm gonna stop with my needle down. Now that my needle is down, that end of the piece is pinned. And now I can just peek under here to see that this sewing line here is about a quarter inch in from the edge of that fabric underneath, if you can see, okay? So, I'm gonna drop my foot and sew ahead down this line. A lot of times people will ask me about stitch length and that is a good question. You don't need to adjust the stitch length on your machine for the security of the piece, but shorter stitches will give you more perforations and it will make the paper easier to remove. So I often say that choosing your stitch length has a lot to do with what you hate more. Do you hate removing stitches when you've made a mistake which I do fairly frequently, or do you hate to remove paper? I don't mind removing paper, so I keep my stitch length at whatever the standard is for the machine. I think it's 2.0 for the Bernina. But if you really hate removing paper you can take that stitch length to more stitches per inch and that will give you more holes in the paper and it will help with paper removal. All right, so I have this first line sewn. I'm gonna flip this. Again, with this pattern, the pieces are small, so you're not really gonna have a problem with making sure that you're covering. But here's the area that we wanna cover with this and you can see that your

background piece is covering everything that you need. So let's talk about shadowing for a minute. I've chosen to use a white background with, you know, varying darknesses of fabric. And what that means is that there is a slight chance that when I finish piecing and fold my white fabric back, I could have a little bit of show through of that dark fabric behind the light. So what I do when I have a light fabric on top, I'm going to finger press that back and undercut that darker fabric. So that way when I fold the white fabric back and then I fold this piece again, then I have two layers of that whiter fabric covering that edge of the darker fabric, and there's less chance that that darker edge is gonna show through. Again, that's really only if you have a big difference in value between one fabric and another and you're worried that you might have show through there. All right, so we have our one piece of sky put on there and then you're gonna wanna press this. You can get up and press with your iron. I like to do a press with my very high tech tool here just to get a good crease on there, and that is just gonna make sure it lays down. Then I can come back and hit that again with the iron to make sure I get a nice flat piece. The flatter the better. Everything goes together more easily if everything is flat. All right, so the next thing I need to cover is this triangular piece of sky. So if I come to this side and I can see that I want the sky to end up like that. So I'm gonna sew it on in this aspect and then I'm gonna flip it out. All right, so I'm gonna come back to this side and just check on this side to see, again, here's my sewing line. I want the edge of this piece to be about a quarter inch inside that line. You might notice that I have a piece of fabric here. This is my leader, and what this does for me, it just means that I don't have to go back later and trim all those little threads off. Okay, so let me go ahead and lift this foot and I'm gonna place this again a couple of stitches, one, two, and then needle down. And now I can lift. That piece is pinned under there. And I can adjust this piece underneath. Looking at my sewing line, I see that that edge is about a quarter inch inside that sewing line, which is where I want it. So now I can go ahead and sew down, and again I'm going to sew down to the nose of that goose and then I'm gonna give it a few extra stitches. Okay? Then I'll pull this out. And put it back on the leader. Okay, so again, I'm gonna flip to this side, check it out. There's really, this is such a small little triangle here because it's on the inside curve. I'm not gonna have any issue with coverage, so I'm not gonna worry about that. But I do see, again, this dark edge here. So I wanna press that back and trim that under so I don't get that shadow. So there again, I have one and now two layers. And then I wanna use my pressing device. Again, all kinds of people use all kinds of different ones. You might like a bone folder you might have a little roller you might use your fingernails. This just happens to be my favorite little tool for pressing. Now it's time to put a goose on. So I need to pick a color over here. I'm going with a multicolor situation here. So I'm gonna pick a color that's different from the goose that's already there. And I'm going to need to sew the goose on like this and then it's gonna flip over. But let's turn this over and look at it for a minute so that we can talk a little bit about why I like to do a couple of extra little stitches there. So I don't know if you can see this but you can see that the stitching on the first seam and the stitching on the second seam cross right here and conveniently it's on the side that I'm sewing on, so I can see it. When I sew my goose on, I wanna make sure that I hit that cross exactly in the middle because if I do then I'm gonna have a real nice point. The point of that goose is going to pull right up to the rear end of the next goose. So I'm gonna have a nice clean point transition from one goose to the next. So let's place the goose. Now I'm gonna want to put this guy behind here and I want about the same amount of wing tip hanging off on one end and the other. Just sort of an even distribution of goose along that line. And again, I'm going to drop my foot. Give myself a couple of stitches. Needle down, and then just double check here. Again, here's my sewing line, and I want this edge to be about a quarter inch inside that line. The nice thing about

this technique is you drop that needle, you know that end is properly attached, and now I can swing this end to make sure it's lined up properly without worrying about getting out of alignment up top there. So I'm gonna swing this until it is about a quarter inch inside that line, and then I'm gonna sew down this line but I'm gonna keep an eye on those crossed stitches. None of us is perfect, right? So I might have not hit that, that line, straight on, but if I know that what I'm aiming for is to take my stitching down where those two lines of stitching cross, then even if I have to sort of move off that line in a little bit to hit that cross, I can still hit it and then I can get that nice point on my goose. So let's go ahead down here and see if I manage to get this right. And again, I'm going to just take my leader off, pop him on the front. Cut some these extra threads off here. Alright. Okay? So I'm gonna flip this to check it. And you can see there's that nice point on that goose coming right up to the next goose. Now that I put that goose on, I can go ahead and trim out this excess. There's a lot of seams on this and the pieces are small so it tends to get a little bit bunched here. So you do want to trim for bulk just to get the bulk out of there. Now I'm going back in to put in my next two sets of background. Here's my sewing line. This guy's gonna go on like this and flip out. So I'm gonna put this on, I'm peeking back here. There's my edge. It's about a quarter inch from my sewing line. Gonna pop this up, grab my sewing line. Make sure this is properly aligned, and I'm gonna come on down here to the nose of the goose and a couple of extra stitches. Get those stitches onto my leader. Flip this to make sure I have coverage, but it's fine. Flip this back and trim. Again, I'm just trimming for bulk and this color is not really so dark that I'm worrying but I'm just gonna flip that back and undercut anyway. Press. And come in with my next piece of sky. Pop that in there coming from out here, couple of stitches, needle down, check it for placement. Down past the end of the goose by a couple of stitches. Onto the leader. Flip this guy out. Looks good. Take this back, trim it out. So now I have two more geese to put on this round and I will be done with it. Goose number one, goose number two. Here comes goose number three. Again, laying behind. And as I sew that, I wanna make sure that I hit my cross threads. (sewing machine whirring) Here comes the sky for goose three. It does not matter which side you go, whether you go on the inside of the curve or the outside of the curve first, as you're adding your pieces of background, whichever makes sense for you is fine. There is no right way to do that. Oops, I got a little, a little bending there. This is where our friend the seam ripper comes in. Pop that out. I was just wondering to myself whether I was gonna make it through this without making any mistakes. Sometimes I tell my students that I'm only making mistakes for demonstration purposes but in fact I still make all the same mistakes. Even after being sewing for so many years. All right, here we go. Let's get this guy done. Undercut that dark. And here comes our last piece. (sewing machine whirring) All righty. So again, I'm going to undercut on this one 'cause it is such a dark color. All right, and there we are. So you can see we have our four geese. You're probably looking at this and thinking that they're not really the right size or proportion, but once you have trimmed this out and then you join this on with the next piece, these geese will all be laying out in the right size. Once you have finished piecing your arc you're gonna wanna give it a press with your iron. We've already pressed it with, you know, with finger pressing, however you like to do that. So I just wanna give this a press. I want it to be flat because the flatter we get it, the easier all of the pieces will go together. After pressing it, we're gonna let it cool a little bit and then we're going to trim it along the solid black line on the pattern. This is when you're gonna wanna have your smaller rotary cutter, because these are some tight curves here and it's just a little bit easier to do the trimming with a smaller blade. So I'm gonna start here and trim my straightaways. Different folks feel differently about trimming. Some folks are more comfortable trimming something like this with scissors. I'm generally a rotary cutter trimmer. When I'm cutting a

tight little curve like this I find that it's easier to turn the piece rather than trying to rotate the blade. When I rotate the blade against the mat it's more likely to gouge the mat or to dull the blade. So I'm going to get in here and turn the piece. Now I have, you know, a lot of layers in here, right? Because we've paper pieced a whole bunch of layers in there. So you're gonna wanna go slow to get around that curve and you probably wanna check your blade and see that you have a fresh blade that, you know it's not too dull. Okay, again, here coming on this curve, I'm going to turn the piece rather than turning the blade. And that just makes for a cleaner cut with less wear and tear on the mat and on the blade. All right? So now that we've got this trimmed, we're gonna go ahead and remove the paper. When I'm removing paper I like to try to pay attention to these edges. So we have sewn along here and then we've trimmed on those edges, so they're going to be vulnerable. And so you wanna make sure that you're not pulling too hard on those stitches as you're removing the paper. So I like to put my thumbnail right on those stitches at the edge while I am loosening them there. And I'll put my thumbnail over here while I'm loosening these pieces. And then once I get that nice straight line I'm gonna give it a fold and I'm going to tear. Just as though you were tearing a check out of a checkbook which I know is sort of an archaic reference. What that does is I'm pulling the paper away from the paper. I'm not putting stress on these stitches so I'm not pulling them out and I'm not distorting the fabric or, you know, putting any extra stress on it there. And then I'm just gonna move down the line here. Again, being careful on those edges. Now here you have this situation where you have those crossed stitches so you're gonna have to sort of wiggle around those to loosen that paper and pull it free. Generally, as I'm manufacturing these pieces I'll leave the paper in until I'm finished with all of them until I'm ready to put these arcs together into the quilt. And then I'll sit down with, you know, some good conversation or something on the tube or a podcast and then go ahead and pull my paper at leisure. And that works well for me. Lots of folks really don't care for the paper removal operation. There are lots of different ways that you can paper piece. I paper piece in a fairly traditional way. But many people like to paper piece with freezer paper or with glue stick method where you don't actually sew on the paper. You fold your paper back and sew right along the edge so that you get that line by sewing on the edge. I don't really mind removing paper, so I have not taken the time to master any of those other methods, but you certainly can look into them. Or if those are the methods that you like to use you can go ahead and use them. I'm not invested in you doing things exactly the way I do them. I think that you should use whatever methods you're comfortable with and accustomed to and just build the pattern the way that you're comfortable with. All right, I am moving down here, getting towards the end. It's a good thing I picked the short one, right? Here we go. We're almost done pulling the paper and then we're gonna have that little arc. So of course for this there are six arcs in each quarter circle. So that means 24 arcs in total. This is a small quilt. This pattern originated with a larger quilt but I will tell you that it does not take any less time to piece the small quilt because it's, you know, the same amount of pieces. So this is sort of a long term quilt, right? And so you're gonna go ahead and sew those curves and that's what we're gonna do next.

Join arcs and add centers and shoulders

- Sewing curves is one of the things that quilters sometimes feel a little nervous about. And we are gonna need to sew the curves of our arcs together now. Various people, again, will do it differently. Some people like to use glue, a little bit of liquid glue to anchor those seams as they're sewing them together. Some people like to use a lot of pins. I'm generally a one pin curve sewer. So I have my curves here. I have sewn these two curves already. A lot of times when sewing successive curves,

it's a nice idea to sew the larger ones first, because those are the easiest to sew. As you move down towards these tighter curves, those are a little bit more challenging. Let's go ahead and join these two pieces. So what I need to do, I'm gonna get my pins, and I'm going to fold this in half to find the center of that curve. Now you can see here that I have an even number of geese, so the center point is marked by this seam at this point. And when I look at this one, I believe I have an odd number of geese on this one. Yes, I do. So here's where I need to give that a crease, so that I can see where that center is and then match those centers as I'm sewing this together. I usually sew my curves with the concave curve on top, or as some people will say, with the smile on top. That way, I can see what's going on on this curve, which is the one that's going to be doing most of the moving. And it's the place where I'm more likely to get a little tuck or a joint that's not as smooth as one might want it to be. I'm going to match those two up and pin it, so that I know that that is the center point. And then I need to bring this edge, this square edge around here to this square. And sometimes I'll pin that. Usually, I'll just go ahead and pop that into the machine. This is the place where if you were a person who wanted to maybe use the glue, you would run a bead of glue along this edge, and then you would position this curve along this curve, matching your edges to get a nice smooth join. But since I'm, again, this one pin girl, I'm gonna go ahead and take this, position these corners, and then I'm going to pull the machine over and put this under the foot and then continue on the curve. So I have my two square edges matched up. I'm going to slide those under my foot, and I want to get that exactly lined up, so I get my quarter inch seam allowance. The two things that I'm going to be paying attention to here are number one, that that seam allowance is a scant quarter inch. I'm gonna say a scant quarter inch, because there's a lot of bulk along this curve, because of the wingtip of all of the geese as we move along here. That bulk is gonna use up space when we turn the piece out and press it. I want to go scant on that so there's enough room to get a full extension there, and that we won't be using up width on this piece with that bulk, and thereby have the piece end up, you know, the wrong size. I'm going to give myself a couple of stitches. I'm just gonna do these manually, so that it doesn't run away with me. And now that I have that pinned on that end, I'm going to just carefully make sure that this is nice and smooth as I run down this edge here. And again, two things I'm watching, seam allowance and the fact that I wanna make sure these edges are lined up with one another. I don't want this edge to pull back. I don't want the one underneath to pull back. It's really important that I get a well-measured seam here, because that's gonna affect the stability of the whole piece when we're finished. All right, here we go. I'm going slow. Every once in a while, you know, you look at a new machine and the salesman will tell you, "Well, this machine will sew 1,500 stitches an inch." And that's really not an advantage for me, because I'd rather, you know, move along slowly and get it right the first time than blast along at rocket pace, and, you know, not quite get everything lined up properly. So once I hit that middle point where the pin is, I'm gonna pull that pin, I'm gonna bring this edge around, and square it off like this and give that a pin, and now I can complete that curve. I'll drop this foot, and again, I'm watching my edges. I'm watching my quarter inch, and I'm watching this to make sure that I don't get any tucks or, you know, wrinkles. And if I do, this is not the end of the world. If I do get a wrinkle or a tuck, then I'm going to just get out my trusty seam ripper and take it out and just redo it. It doesn't take but a minute, and it's worthwhile to have it lay properly. All right, so we've got this one done. Let's open it up and take a look. Looks pretty good. What I'm looking for here is whether I can see my points, whether there are any little wrinkles. Now, as I mentioned before, this is bulky up in here, so it's gonna take a certain amount of persuasion to get this seam to lay down. So I'm gonna be paying attention when I do this, and generally, they will press either up or down. And what I like to do in order to make

things easier to put my quarters together when I have them finished is two of my quarters, I'm gonna press all of those seams up, and two of my quarters, I'm gonna press all of those seams down. And that way as I'm joining the quarters at the edges, I have a nice offset of those seams. I can nest them together, and that reduces the bulk when I'm sewing those quarters together. All right, so before I do any pressing here, I'm gonna go ahead and add one more curve piece on here. So here we are. Again, I need to find my centers. So I'm gonna fold this in half. I remember that this one is the one with the odd number of geese. So I cannot just take the seam as the center point. Here, I can take that seam as a center point. Match this with this with my smile on top. Get my pin. Here we are. All right, so I'm gonna pin that so I'm matching those centers. And then same thing again, I'm gonna bring this edge around, square it up, sew that on there, right? Get it under the foot right at that quarter inch mark. I'm gonna give it a couple stitches. Okay, so now, I'm going to, now that I have that end pinned, I'm just going to make sure those edges are meeting up nicely and start, quarter inch. Maybe a little bit scant. So I find, I'm not sure how many of you out there have multiple sewing machines. I seem to have quite a collection. It's what happens when you give into one of these obsessions as I have to quilting. And so I have different machines, and some of them I have a better quarter inch relationship with, right? So I usually, when I'm doing this kind of work where it really is kind of important that that quarter inch seam is accurate. I use, I have a great relationship with my Bernina. I have a good relationship with my little Singer 401, which is as old as I am, but some of my other machines, and I'm sure it's not the fault of the machine, but I just don't have as much accuracy sewing that quarter inch seam as I do with certain ones. So you probably know which machines that you have works best for that quarter inch measurement. So make sure that you're using the machine that is gonna work best for you and get you the best accuracy. Okay, there we are. We've got another curve sewn, and probably now is when I will stop and give this a good press, and then I can go ahead and sew it on to my top three tiers. Last curve. Here's my center, here's my center, let me match 'em up. There we go. And bring this around. Line up the corners. Drop it in. And once again, now that it's in, now I have the room and the opportunity to line this up, smooth it out, and get that quarter inch lined up. And again, I'm going slow. I'm not in a big rush. I'd rather get it down and get it done once. Got to the center, needle down, pull my pin. I'm gonna line this up. Pin. Sometimes I'll, after I set that up, I'll lift the foot to sort of redistribute the bits that are under there and then I can finish up. (sewing machine whirring) Okey dokey. There we are. In order to get our quarters complete, we need to sew on a shoulder, which is what is gonna take this rounded edge to a square edge. And we need to sew our little center in at the very center. Then we will have four completed quarters, which we can then assemble into a whole quilt. So I have cut out the shoulder pattern, and I just wanna show you a little trick for cutting your shoulders with the least amount of waste. I'm going to take my strip of fabric. I've cut a strip that is five and a half inches wide. It's the full width of fabric, so selvage to selvage. There's a little string here. It's folded in half. And I need to find the center on this strip. So I'm just gonna give it another fold just so I can find the center point on here between this edge and this edge. And then I'm going to just put my finger right in the center there. And I'm gonna take my ruler and find the 45 degree angle. So most rulers will have a 45 degree angle drawn somewhere on the body of the ruler, so that you can measure that 45. So I'm gonna line up that 45 degree line from the ruler, and have it go through that center point that I found just by folding it in half. Once I've got that lined up with the edge, I know that I had a 45 degree angle here. And then I'm gonna go ahead and cut that 45 degree angle. Now I can take this piece here and bring it around and stack it up on this one. Okay? And now I can take this pattern and just lay it on top of that piece, the 45 degree angle lines up there. And then all

I have to cut is this straight and that curve, and it cuts down on the amount of waste. So I'm going to just use my ruler to help me with that straight edge. There's just a little straight part there. All right. And then I'm just gonna turn this to make it a little bit easier for me to manage. I'm gonna grab my smaller rotary cutter, because I have this curve here, and I'm just going to cut along that curve. Now a lot of folks will be looking and they will be nervous about that blade being close to my fingers. And I'm just gonna say that I don't move the blade and the fingers at the same time so I always know where the fingers are. But you can totally pin this on and cut it with scissors if you prefer. If you don't like to do freehand rotary cutting. But there we are. Now I have two shoulder units that I can use to put onto my arc units. So the other thing I need to do here is to sew my little tiny center on here. Now, you know, we've just done our curves, and we know that these larger curves are fairly easy to sew. And I'm just gonna say straight up that this little bitty guy here with this little one is not particularly easy. It's really kind of a pain. So some folks will prefer to do a little appliqué, so they'll turn under that edge, and either top stitch or hand stitch it on there. I do usually go ahead and do the curve the way I've sewn all the others, but it is a little tricky and sort of a pain. So I'll find my center there. Now this is my smile, right? Even though it's just a tiny smile. I'm gonna match up that center with my center there, put a pin in, and then I'm gonna go ahead and sew that curve the same way I've sewn the others. One thing about this is that because it is so tight and because it's mostly straight grain around that curve, it might be helpful for me to put in a few clips. So I'm gonna get my scissors and I'm just going to clip very gently, very shallow along this edge. So just a little clip. And what that's gonna do is just help to release that edge, so that I can get it around that curve. I'm being careful to move that piece behind out of the way when I'm clipping, so I don't clip that as well. And then I'm gonna pull this corner around here, line it up. I might even spare a pin here since it's so tight. Okay, so there's my pin. I'm gonna put this end in the machine. Let me just make sure I'm lined up properly. Couple of stitches. And now I'm gonna pull that pin and just take a look at what's going on here. Get that, those edges lined up. I'm going to, again, being paying attention to my edges and my quarter inch seam as I come around this tight, tight little curve. Come to that center again. I'm gonna pull my pin, bring this corner around, and line it up. Okay? And, wiggle and push and get around this circle. So you can see, you know, it is tight. And if you are a person that likes to do applique or you just wanna fold that edge under and give it a little top stitch, that is definitely an option. But you can see, we got our curve sewn. It's not too bad. And now we're ready to do our shoulder. We've got these two pieces here, and I'm just going to go ahead and sew a quarter inch seam down this, it's not the longest edge, but it's the second longest straight edge, I guess. Get that back there. This is, again, just a nice quarter inch seam, nothing fancy. And then we get to sew that curve, which after the one we've just sewn is going to be a delight, because it's nice and big, it's gentle. There's a lot of bias edge, so there's give in the edge, and it's not going to give us as much trouble as that little skinny one. And I'm just going to press this edge to one side or the other. You could press open, I suppose, if you wanted to. I generally will press to the side. You also can press this with your iron. Okay. Now I wanna find, again, this is my last search for the center. So there's my center there right at that seam line. Easy to find the center here, 'cause it's also on the seam line. And I'm gonna pin and then sew this nice big gentle curve, which is lovely to sew. Square up that edge, pop it under, make sure I don't lose my thread. There we go. And again, this one is so, so much easier. Just keeping that edge, those edges lined up, keeping that quarter inch seam allowance. (sewing machine whirring) Come to the center, pull my pin, and I'll bring this around here, square it up, and take it on around. (sewing machine whirring) All righty. And there we have it, our nice shoulder on our six arcs, and we have one quarter finished.

Now go ahead and finish your other three quarters.

Complete the mini quilt top

- Four quarters finished, yay! I've been careful about how I press my seams. On this quarter all of my seams are pressed out towards the outer corner. Here, I've pressed all of the seams in, towards the inner corner. And what that's gonna do for me is give me seams that are pressed in opposing directions, and they will nest together with one another to help me get a nice clean line on that seam, and also to reduce the bulk at those junctures. So let's go ahead and start pinning those. And at each seam, again, I'm going to offset those, so that they're nesting against one another. And I'm just gonna pin, now, I know I'm not much of a pinner, and I haven't been pinning too much thus far, but this is gonna be my big pin scene, because I like to get all of these to come together nicely, play together nicely and lay flat. There's a lot of seams, a lot of seams in this quilt, right? Because so many little pieces, and so to the best of my ability I like to try to manage those, so that they don't, so that they don't fight against one another as we are laying the quilt out, and certainly as the quilt is being quilted, if you are going to quilt this. If I can just get them to lay cleanly then the whole piece comes together. Okay, so now that I have this pinned, I can move over to the machine here and sew this seam, and I'm gonna pay attention as I sew it, just to make sure that none of these are folding the wrong way underneath, so that I can keep that nice clean join on those seams. We're all pinned up, I'm gonna line this up under my foot there, hold onto those ends to make sure, oh good, make sure I don't come unthreaded, and then just take my time sewing that seam, keeping them even as always, keeping my quarter inch seam allowance as always. And just taking care that those edges that I pressed so carefully, so that they nest are not turning themselves backwards as I sew. Just pulling my pins as I go. And there we are, all the way to the end. Take this out. And there are my geese are, with their points coming up against the other geese, and now we're ready to sew the two halves together. So again, I'm gonna bring them together and I'm pinning at each of these seam junctures, and because I've pressed them in opposite directions they're gonna lay nice and straight, and I'm almost at full completed quilt status. This part of the process is always sort of exciting, when you're just almost there, and you get to see how everything that you've done so far is starting to come together. All right, I'm gonna go ahead and get started on this end, and as I pull those pins, I can slip 'em in later on. All right, thread's back, same song, keeping my edges even, and keeping that quarter inch seam allowance consistent. Sometimes this goes a little slow just, because we do have so much bulk in these edges here, so much going on. So I was teaching with another quilter, who referred to the end, you know, we all have so much anticipation as we come to the end of a project, she called it "The big ta-da." So we've just got a couple more seconds here until we get the big ta-da. And again, the fact that we've offset these seams against one another is just making this run through a little more smoothly, and hopefully will give us a slightly flatter product when we get finished. Now the fact is that, you know, this quilt is, again, made with so many little pieces, that it's never going to be super flat, because there's just a lot going on, but there we are. There's my mini Release the Geese mini quilt, and you can see all of those geese, and they do take you a little bit of time to finish, all of those geese, they're just so pleasing and so worth it. I have all these blues running together, I put in a few geese in the same linen that I have on the shoulders, so we have a little repetition of color there, and I'm really pleased with the way it turned out. I also have another one here that you can look at, this one is a simple black and white version. These geese over here are going clockwise, these geese are counterclockwise, doesn't really seem to make too much difference. And you can see here we played a little bit with light and dark, it's just a black and white

quilt, and we have alternated the color on the shoulder, and we've alternated the background color as we move from round to round, arc to arc. So we get this sort of interesting little color or pattern variation at the corners where the black turns to white, and then the white turns to black, continuing around the quilt. So there are lots and lots of different variations you can use, you can combine fabrics of patterns, and solids, and different textures, there's really not much limit to the things that you can do to render this quilt.