
Learn Raw Edge AppliquÃ© Quilting with Sue Nickels

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Hi, my name is Sue Nickels and my class is on machine applique. I have been a quilter for over 30 years. I started my quilting techniques by hand and I did hand applique for many years, but I love to incorporate my sewing machine. And this class will be completely using the sewing machine to do all of the techniques. I have developed a technique with my sister, Pat Holly, and it's called Stitched Raw Edge Machine Applique. And we use a small amount of fusible on the edge of the applique and then we stitch it with a blanket stitch. We're gonna cover many details in machine applique starting with preparation, we need to have good accuracy, good cutting of the applique pieces. We're gonna then cover the stitching. We're gonna do a little thread stem. We're going to do a complex unit. And by the time you're done with class, you'll have everything you need to be successful in machine applique.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- Let's talk about the supplies we're going to use for machine applique. We wanna use 100% cotton fabrics, and I like to prewash my fabrics and have them ready to go. We'll need about eight to 10 different fabrics for the applique, and about a quarter yard works well, fat quarters are fine to use also. For the inner border, we will need about a quarter yard of fabric. For the outer border about three quarters yard of fabric. For your background, my background's this pretty white, we're gonna need a 20-inch square, and you'll need a little extra for practicing. We'll need a square of batting, and the square can be about 32 inches. We'll need some backing fabric, and about a yard will work well for that. And then your binding, we're gonna need about a half of yard for that. Our next supply I wanna talk about is paperback fusible web, and this is a essential part of the technique, and it's important to have a good quality paperback fusible web. It has paper on one side, fusible on the other. I like a product called soft fuse. It's a nice lightweight paperback fusible web with paper on one side and fusible on the other. I like it a lot because it doesn't separate from the paper, and that's a real important part of this technique. We're gonna cut these little edgings, which you'll see in a bit, and we want that paper and fusible to stay connected, and it's just a great product. The next supply I'm going to talk about are these two items, and this is called an applique pressing sheet, and this is parchment paper. And they're both release papers and you can fuse onto these, and the fusible won't stick to them. And we use this for a specific technique a little later on. I need sharp pencils. I like to use pencils versus pens. Sometimes I draw and I wanna erase, so it's really nice to just use sharp pencils and have a nice pencil sharpener so you can keep those pencils sharp. We're always gonna work from a full-size pattern. You wanna have a clean copy, and you will have this in a PDF available to you. I'm going to use a nice, sharp pair of small embroidery scissors for both cutting the fusible and when we get to the fabric. And that's very very important to have nice, sharp scissors and scissors that are easy to handle. I like to use small tweezers to help me move the fusible pieces around and then when I'm arranging them on the background. So, a nice thing to have. It makes it a lot easier to pick those pieces up. I'm going to use spray starch as a stabilizer for my background fabric, and I use either the starch that you buy at the grocery store, or a product that's available at quilt shops called Best Press. They both work just fine. I like to have a light box available to me. Just

a small, portable light box works great. Sometimes you need this to trace the back of the pattern. And that's a great way to see that. And then also if I have a dark background when I'm setting the applique pieces up on that background, I wanna see the pattern through that, and the light box will help you with that. I like to use 100% cotton thread. This is a 50 weight three-ply. It's a nice average weight, and it looks really pretty along the raw edge. I want to have a lot of bobbins ready, and I like to match the thread on the top with the thread in the bobbin. My sewing machine needles, I like to use sharp needles, and the Schmetz brand that I buy are called Microtex Sharp needles. And I'd like to select the size determined by the weight of the thread. For my 50 weight three-ply thread I'm gonna use an 80/12 sewing machine needle. Another needle that I use in this technique is a self-threading needle, and it's a hand-sewing needle, and I use it for a specific thing in securing the thread ends. Another essential item for machine applique is an open-toe applique foot, for the stitching of the blanket stitch. And I like the foot open because it gives me really good visibility for stitch placement along the edge of the applique, and if you can't see the edge of the applique, it's very very hard to get good results if you have a foot that has something in front of the needle. Every machine brand has one of these available, and you really must use this for machine applique. I use a stiletto to help me guide the fabric at times and just for some detail work at the machine. It's nice to have some straight pins and a hand sewing needle available. I like to use circle templates to help me draw perfect circles. And, circle templates sometimes are confusing. Students don't know what they are when they're on a supply list. But basically, they're an item you buy in the drafting department of office supply stores, and they have just many different size circles, and I'm able to find the exact size circle on my pattern and draw that perfectly, and then it's easier to cut a perfect circle. We're going to need a mat board, an acrylic ruler, I like a six by 24-inch ruler, and a rotary cutter. These are very basic items for the quilter, but we do use them to have accurate cutting of all of our pieces. We also need an iron and an ironing board. And, we want an iron that you can adjust the heat very accurately. And of course the most important supply is our beautiful sewing machine. We do want the sewing machine to have a blanket stitch available.

Chapter 3 - Create Applique

Prepare applique pieces

- We'll begin with a preparation technique. We will start with our full-sized pattern. And my pattern has some asymmetry to it, so I will need to draw on my paperback fusible web from the reverse image. The reason that we need to do that is we are drawing on the paper side of the paperback fusible web, but we'll be fusing to the back of the fabric, so this pattern, it gets reversed. What we wanna do is we want to be able to draw the pattern from that back side. What I like to do is just to go to the copy center and make a mirror image pattern, and that's what I've done here. I also like to write that this is the back side of the pattern so I don't get confused about which I'm drawing the patterns from and which one I'll actually set the applique up on. If you don't have the capability to make a mirror image pattern, you could also use a light box and flip your pattern over, and then you can take your fusible, which we're gonna draw on the paper side, and lay it on top of your pattern and draw your applique right on the paperback fusible web. If your pattern is symmetrical, you can skip this step. My pattern has asymmetry, so I need to draw all of my applique from the reverse image. Let's get started. We're gonna start working on a small practice piece to learn the techniques of preparation and stitching. It's a good idea to practice before you go to your actual applique block, because it does take some practice to get the technique down. What I would wanna do first is prepare a practice piece of background. So, use the same background fabric that you're using for

your actual block, and I would cut it about 10 inches square. We also wanna starch this practice piece as we'll do for our main background square. And I'm going to use that spray starch. A couple of applications gets it to about the weight of, if you felt it, it feels kinda like lightweight paper, and that's perfect. Once we get that ready to go, we're gonna go to our pattern. And remember, I'm using the one that is the reverse image. We're gonna use a few flowers, some leaves, and some small circles. They have all of the aspects that we'll need to talk about in the stitching. I'm gonna take my paperback fusible web. Start with this small flower. It's a flower that I call a multiple layer unit. It's a really good one for practice. I'm going to have my nice sharp pencil and my paperback fusible web. We wanna draw always on the paper side. And it's easy to tell the paper side 'cause it's smoother. If you're drawing on the opposite side, which is the fusible side, it's very rough and the pencil line doesn't show up very well. And I wanna draw accurately, and I'm just gonna draw the exact pattern. And this is why I like to use pencil, 'cause sometimes I don't draw as accurately, and I can go back and I can erase and try again. And here's an example of a circle that would be nice to use our circle template to draw the correct size and more accurate. I just bring the circle template in, and I find the circle that's the perfect size, and I'm gonna draw that nice, neat circle. With a multiple layer unit, you can draw that circle right inside of that flower, because as you'll see, we're gonna just cut a little edging, and we can get two pieces out of the same area of fusible. I'm gonna do, probably about three leaves is good practice. It gives us outside points to practice in the stitching. I'm gonna draw carefully my three leaves. And the leaves off of this branch are all the same leaf. You don't need to number them. They're all exactly the same. I could actually draw all three of these from the same leaf. I also want to do my tulip. And the tulip has an interesting thing going on. It has what we call an underlying edge. And any time there's an underlying edge situation, I put these little double lines on my pattern, and you'll see in a little bit what that indicates. As I'm drawing this, I'm going to draw the base of the tulip first. And just draw as carefully as you can. And I don't wanna draw that top part of the tulip in the spot that it is on the pattern. I'm gonna move away slightly, and I'm gonna draw that top part separately. And I'm gonna put those little marks right where they are in the pattern. That indicates something to me that will happen a little later when we're at the fabric level. We wanna draw that tulip just like that. And we're also gonna do a few circles. Circles are really good for practicing our stitching around curves. And I am going to use my circle template again, because I can get a more perfectly drawn circle. And I'm gonna find the size of that circle. Basically, I can draw that same circle a couple of times, and we'll have a couple of those to practice in the stitching. These are simple shapes, and they will teach the method of preparation and stitching very nicely. The next step is we're gonna cut our little edgings. And the reason that we're cutting edgings, it's almost like a little donut of fusible, is that I don't wanna have a lot of fusible building up in my applique. And what I'm using is just a little 1/4 inch edging, so the main part of the applique does not have any fusible. Especially when you get those multiple layer units, you can get pretty heavy and thick with fusible, and it can be quite stiff. And I like my applique to feel very, very soft, so we're gonna get rid of as much of that fusible as possible. What we need the fusible for is to what I call seal the raw edge so you are less likely to get fraying, and to stick that applique to the background in order to stitch it. I'm cut my edgings now. One of the things you also wanna be careful of is that you handle the fusible gently. And so I like to kinda cut away, say this flower unit, and then I'm gonna set the rest of the paper down and come back to it for those other pieces. The first step is to cut a little bit on the outside of your pattern line. And this doesn't really matter how much on the outside. Just a little bit. If you're somebody that needs a measurement, 1/4 inch is fine. And it doesn't have to be extremely accurate here, because

eventually this side will get cut away. Now, we create the edgings by taking our scissors and coming in right across that pattern line, and now I'm gonna cut that 1/4 inch, accurate 1/4 inch on the inside of the pattern line. And you can see it's gonna create this little window. And it reduces the amount of fusible. It gives you better, I guess, use of your fusible product. And I'm gonna carefully set this aside so it doesn't get blown away or you don't lose it. And then I can come and I cut the circle. And again a little bigger on the outside. And I'm going to cut into my circle. We're gonna continue doing this for all of the pieces. I'm gonna go ahead and cut my leaves a little big bigger on the outside. And what I'm doing here can be an interesting concept. If you are going to use all of the same fabric for your leaves, you can kinda keep them connected, and then they're just a little easier to handle. I'm still gonna cut a little bigger all the way around, and I'm still gonna go in and cut my little window, my little edging. I have had students that often comment on the way that I hold my hands when I'm cutting with my scissors. And basically the scissors are in my right hand because I'm right-handed. I leave my scissor hand very steady. I don't move that. And with my left hand, I bring the fusible into my scissors. And I think you get a lot smoother cutting when you're doing that, especially when we get to the fabric side. And another thing, when you use these really sharp scissors, if you cut right at the end of the scissors, sometimes you can actually get those scissors to go between the paper and the fusible and it causes the paper to pull away from the fusible. So, come in a little deeper and do your cutting, oh, maybe 1/4 inch in from the point of that scissor. So, those three leaves are all attached, and I could use that with all the same fabric. I'm gonna continue with my tulip. And the tulip is drawn separately, and we're gonna cut them separately also. And just cut that bigger piece away so I don't abuse that. And we're gonna go in. This, I think, is a really good example of a big area that it's real important to get that amount of fusible out, but this is a pretty big area. I could even reuse this piece, so don't throw that away. I could do little circles in there. You wanna save those little pieces for future projects. I'm gonna cut the top of that tulip. The little underlay marks, those we'll deal with when we get to the fabric level. So, everything is the same right now on this piece as it is for all of the rest of them. And then the last thing I'm gonna cut are the little circles. And these circles are pretty small. My general rule of thumb is if the piece is smaller than a dime, I don't cut away the edging. So, let's see. Yep, this is smaller than a dime. And if I cut that edging, you'd just get a little tiny bit of fusible out, so it's really not necessary on small circles. My other circle that I cut is interesting, because it is probably about the size of a dime, so this is a toss-up. I probably would not have needed to cut that away, but I tend to say if it is smaller than a dime, so I'm kinda following that. The next step that we're going to do once we have our practice edgings ready is we're going to fuse those to our fabric. I'm gonna get my space ready and my fabric out. And don't get too concerned about fabric choices when you are working on the practice piece. This is just for practice. We wanna just learn the technique. And I've just selected a few of the fabrics from my block and I am going to fuse those. So, I'm gonna get my iron ready. I like to use between a wool and a cotton setting and a dry iron, and it's very important that you practice a little bit with this too, because every iron is a little different. Every cotton setting isn't the same. And some cotton settings can be a little too hot. That's why I say between a wool and a cotton setting. And just find out what is best for your particular iron. My iron at home I can set at a true cotton setting. One of my travel irons I have to turn down to a wool. It gets a little too hot at the cotton setting. How would you know if the iron is too hot? And this is gonna sound funny, but if you're getting any smoking like you're burning the paper, your iron is too hot. If you scorch the paper, the iron is too hot. Just back off a little bit. I'm going to lay my applique fabric on my ironing board. And this step is the most important to do correctly. We want to always fuse to the back of the fabric. If

you fuse to the front of the fabric, you have to like the back of your fabric, because that's what is going to be up on top. You would have to start all over if you didn't like the back. The other thing that's really important is that you fuse the fusible side down to the back of the fabric. If you fuse the fusible side up, it will fuse to your iron and you have to start all over again also. I like to use small tweezers to pick up my edgings. It's a lot easier to grab them. And sometimes if you use your fingers, it's a little abusive to the fusible. And remember, our most important thing is not to have that paper and fusible separate. I am going to remember our mantra is fusible side down to the back of the fabric. If your fusible side is up, it's pretty easy to tell, because you can't see that pattern line, that pencil line. And if I fuse this right now, that edging would fuse to the iron. So, we wanna make sure it's always fusible side down to the back of the fabric. I say it in my head before I actually put the iron to the fabric. The other thing I wanna do is where we cut through like that, I wanna make sure that that doesn't separate when I bring the iron to this area, so I'm just gonna tap that with the iron a little bit. Then I'm going to put the iron down and I'm going to fuse for about eight to 10 seconds. You can count that out in your head. You can have a second hand on your watch to determine that. I'm probably at about five seconds right now. Six, seven, eight, that should be fine. And I'm gonna let that cool a little bit, and then we're gonna continue on with the rest of the pieces. And just remembering all of my rules, I'm gonna tap that little slit so that doesn't separate when I put the iron to this. I'm gonna fuse fusible side down to the back of the fabric for eight to 10 seconds. And I can count that out or I can use the second hand on my watch. And again I'm about at five seconds, six, seven, eight. Let's use some different fabric now. You can do something with what's called fussy cutting. And what I did on my actual piece is I made the leaf kind of lay over the leaf on the fabric, and it looks kinda cute. So, what I need to do is cut away one of these leaves, because I need them individual to do this. And what I did is you can see through this little window, which makes this kind of fun to do. And I can position my leaf point to point so that it's gonna look like that little leaf that's on the fabric. And I'm gonna touch that little place that I slit through. I'm gonna fuse for about eight to 10 seconds. And I think I'll set that one aside. And my other leaves, I think I'll just do in a more random kind of a format. And this is where if you're using all the same fabric, you can just lay that connected. And this one's a little bit trickier 'cause I have to do both of those little slit throughs. But now I'm ready to fuse for my eight to 10 seconds. And in my head I'm always saying my little mantra, "Fusible side down to the back of the fabric." Sometimes I accidentally say it out loud, and then it gets annoying. But I definitely wanna pay attention to that. I'm gonna continue with the rest of my pieces. And I am going to put my little circles so that they are just in the green solid area. I might put that one, have a little fussy circle in the center. And these are all pretty small pieces, so I can perhaps, oh, that might look pretty, I can kind of have the iron fusing them all at once. So, I can go down and now I can count for my eight to 10 seconds. We now have all of our practice applique fused to the back of our fabric, and the next step is to cut our pieces out of fabric. Still using the same sharp little scissors. And we're gonna cut right on the pattern line. And you can see now why it didn't matter how big we cut this on the outside, 'cause that just gets cut away. And I feel this is one of the secrets to success in this technique, is with my scissors I'm cutting through paper, fusible, and fabric in one clean cut, and it seals the edge so you're less likely to get fraying. And I'm just gonna continue around. Sometimes it's easier to cut that away. And again, remember holding your right hand steady, and bring the applique into the scissors and you'll get a nice smooth cutting line. There's the back side with a little window of the edging, and then a nice beautiful little tulip shape. I'm gonna go ahead and show you the top of that tulip, because we have something a little bit unusual going on. And I'm just gonna just cut this out of

the main piece. It's a little bit easier to cut accurately. And I am going to cut the raw edge side here. And where these little double lines are, that indicates I'm gonna need a little extra fabric. And these I call underlying edges, or we need a little bit of fabric to tuck under the piece that's gonna lay on top. So, we're gonna cut the raw edge side here. And then we're gonna leave about 1/4 inch of fabric on that side. That's an underlying edge. And when we go to set this up on the main background, this piece goes down first, and then this one lays on top of it. And if you don't have that little bit that tucks under, you may end up seeing background fabric. If they just butted up next to each other, it wouldn't be good to see background. So, if we look at it from the reverse side, you can see that that is gonna lay right like that, and it just has that little tuck under. Any time you see those double lines on my patterns, it means that at the cutting of the fabric part, you need to add that little bit of extra fabric, about 1/4 inch to tuck under the piece that's gonna lay on top of it. We're gonna continue cutting the rest of our applique pieces for practice. Go slowly, have nice smooth lines. No need to rush. And we're gonna continue through all of our pieces. Especially with little circles, it's better to cut away from the main hunk of fabric. It just pulls a little bit when you're cutting. I'm just gonna set that aside, and now I'm gonna cut my little circles. Let's do our leaf that has that really pretty fussy placement so you can see exactly what that looks like. And when I turn that over, isn't that fun? That's gonna look really cute on the actual applique block. And one more piece to cut for our little practice. And we have all of our pieces ready now. Our next step is to fuse our applique to the practice background. What we need to do first is we need to take all of the paper from the back side of our applique that we've prepared. This step can take quite awhile when you've got lots of pieces. The best place to start peeling the paper off is where we cut through that little slit, and you just pull the paper away. That way you don't have to sort of pick at the edge to get the paper started, which could cause some fraying. You also want the paper to come away cleanly. If you were to see any fusible pull back off with the paper, that means that you did something wrong at the fusing step. Either the iron wasn't hot enough or you didn't fuse for long enough. So, just stop and go back and put a little more heat to it. But this one peeled off perfectly. I'm gonna continue doing this for all of my pieces. I'm gonna find where that little slit is. And it comes off pretty easily. Same thing for all of our leaves. Sometimes I have a hard time finding where that little slit through is. There it is. Now, the little circles that I didn't cut the edging that were smaller than a dime, the best way to get the paper off is this is we're going to just fold one side of the circle. And what happens is the fabric stays flat but the paper folds a little bit and you just use that little tab to pull that away. And we've got one more of those to do. We're now gonna fuse these applique pieces to the practice background. On the practice background, we're gonna just set these up in a pleasing arrangement. But when we get to the actual applique block, we are gonna use our pattern and we're gonna set everything up perfectly, and I'm gonna show you that later. Don't get too concerned on the practice piece. It just needs to be easy for you to do the practice. Now we're going to place the applique on our practice background. If you had a background that was a print, just remember to have the print side up when you're doing this. I'm again gonna use my tweezers to pick up all of my little applique. It's just much, much easier to handle, and it's much easier to place it on the background. And again don't get too concerned about this being anything perfect or beautiful. In fact, I like to have the leaves a little bit away from the other applique, 'cause the important part of this is practicing the stitching. And we wanna really have good access to the points. And our little tulip, remember, we wanna put the top part of it down first, and then we're gonna lay this on top of it. And we wanna make sure that that little tuck under is perfectly tucked under, and that looks great. And I'm just going to position a couple of these. Oops, I did my circle

wrong. This one goes here and that one goes there. And we're just gonna place those right about there. I may add a few other things to this, so I'm gonna leave some area open for a little bit later, but we're ready to fuse these pieces down. And when I fuse to the background, I'm going to fuse for about 12 to 15 seconds, so a little bit longer than we did when we fused the edgings to the applique pieces. And remember, we again want that dry iron between a wool and a cotton setting, the same setting you used for the first step. And now I'm going to fuse to the background, and again we're gonna fuse for about 12 to 15 seconds. And you can use the second hand on your watch, you can kinda count it. I'm gonna do both areas. You don't wanna over-fuse, but the one nice thing about this fusible is that you can fuse a little bit more here and there, but you never wanna fuse for a minute or two minutes for this. Really keep it to minimum amounts, 12 to 15 seconds, and then maybe a little bit more here or there. Our applique pieces are all fused to our background, and we're ready to start stitching.

Practice stitching applique pieces

- Let's get started with our stitching. I want to set my sewing machine up for my machine applique. I have my open toe applique foot on. I have my machine threaded with the color thread I wanna use in the top and in the bobbin. Typically I use a matching color thread to the applique I'm stitching, and I think that's just very pretty and very traditional. I'm gonna use in my demo today a contrasting color thread because you'll see my stitches better and I think that's really important. I have the right sized needle, the right type of needle in and I'm ready to go. What I'd like to talk about next is the stitch that we're going to use. I have always used a small blanket stitch. Most of the machines that are out there today currently have a blanket stitch available. The blanket stitch I like to use is called a single blanket stitch. What that blanket stitch does is a straight stitch, it bites in and it bites back, straight stitch, bites in and it bites back. It's a beautiful look on the edge of the applique. Some machines have a double blanket stitch also. I much prefer the single blanket stitch. When I select the single blanket stitch on my sewing machine, we probably aren't gonna use the stitch settings that are pre-determined on your machine. Typically those stitch settings are about 2.5 width and 2.5 length. What happens with that longer length of the blanket stitch is that the bites are too far apart and you expose too much raw edge. What we want is we wanna bring those bites a little closer together. I'm going to select a little bit smaller length. Typically a machine you might go down to 2.0. My machine has a little smaller increments of adjustment, and I'm actually at 1.9. Because we've adjusted the length, we're gonna proportionally want the bite to be a little shorter, also. I'm gonna take that down to about two. My machine with those little bit smaller increments, I'm gonna be at about 2.1, and that's a perfect setting for the blanket stitch, for this small blanket stitch. My machine also has a feature that allows me to move the needle to the far right position and I can follow with the toe of that foot along the edge of the applique and it just makes it a little easier for stitch placement. Let's get started. I'm going to take a small piece of my background fabric and make a little fold and just do a little practice of the blanket stitch to make sure I like those settings that I selected. (machine whirring) As you can see, it's a very small blanket stitch. (machine whirring) I wanna talk a little bit about the placement of that blanket stitch along the edge of the applique and how it's supposed to be done and sometimes how it's done incorrectly. What we want is we want that blanket stitch, the straight stitch portion, to be in the background but right next to the applique. With the needle moved all the way to the right, I want the edge of this right toe to be almost next to the edge of the applique, but there's a little space between. It's actually where the needle goes and where the thread is laying down. It's perfectly positioned there. I'd like to show you

what happens when the stitch placement is incorrect. You don't wanna stitch too far away from the edge of the applique. What happens when you do that is you end up having the straight stitch and then background fabric showing and then the edge of the applique. I think it looks sloppy. So you don't want that to happen. But also what is bad is if you stitch the straight stitch too close to the applique, you're actually stitching on top of that raw edge and it will fray that edge out. That's why it's so important to have the blanket stitch perfectly positioned along the edge of the applique. If your machine doesn't allow you to move the needle all the way to the right in a blanket stitch, you can do the same thing in center needle position and that's just how you'll get used to doing it. (machine whirring) Let's look at the stitching and it's very obvious that this is perfect stitching. The straight stitch in this area is too far away and it looks sloppy. You can see the background fabric showing in this area. And in this area, the straight stitch was actually up on the edge of the applique. If this were a raw edge, you would get what we call little eyelashes that would be frayed, and that's not a good thing, either. Now that we have our stitch settings accurate and we practiced a little bit of that blanket stitch, we're going to bring our practice piece in and I'm going to stitch a leaf. What we're gonna learn is how I deal with my thread ends, how I stitch along a curve, and how I deal with outside points of the leaf. I want to bring the applique into the foot and I don't wanna start at a point, I don't wanna have to deal with thread ends and a point at the same spot. So I'm gonna start at maybe a quarter, half an inch away from that point. I also have left thread tails of my top and bobbin thread, maybe eight to 10 inches. I'm gonna start my stitching, I'm gonna make sure that that stitch placement is perfect, and we start up and stitch. What happens now that we're on a curve is that we're gonna need to pivot frequently to stay snug against the curve. I am always gonna pivot with the needle in the background or the right hand swing of the stitch and with my needle down. I lift my presser foot and I just turn the piece a little bit and I keep that stitch snug along the edge. (machine whirring) Another reason I pivot is to keep the bite perpendicular to the straight stitch. On a gentle curve, you may have to stop to pivot maybe every three to four to five stitch patterns. (machine whirring) What happens if you don't pivot frequently enough is you get too far away from the edge of the applique and you have that sloppy look. Take your time, sew slowly, pivot often. Always pivot in the background fabric or the right hand swing of the stitch. The next thing that we're going to deal with is our outside point. This is an outside point and we wanna set this up so that we can stitch that perfectly. (machine whirring) It's important in blanket stitch applique to always know where you are in your stitch pattern. Right now I'm going into a bite and now I'm biting back. My next stitch is a straight stitch and now I'm biting in and biting back. My next straight stitch is gonna take me to that point. What I wanna do is I wanna lift my presser foot and I wanna turn the applique, pivoting so that the bite will be perpendicular. Now I'm gonna stop with the needle down again, lift my presser foot, and I'm on the other side of the leaf. (machine whirring) Nice, slow stitching is the key to success. If we look at that point, it looks great. That takes a lot of practice, so don't get frustrated. It's gonna take some time to learn that stitch pattern and to always stitch that point perfectly. We're gonna continue stitching along our right side of the leaf. We're going to pivot often. (machine whirring) As you can see, I have to lift my presser foot to pivot a lot. Some machines have features that help you with this and that might be something you would look for in a sewing machine if you're gonna do a lot of machine applique. (machine whirring) Remember as you get closer to that point, you wanna start counting through your stitch pattern. I'm going to be in a bite right now and my next straight stitch should take me to that outside point. Sometimes you're not perfectly where you should be. I don't like to adjust my stitch length at all to solve that. What I do is I fudge a little bit. I think that I might have to make this straight stitch just a teeny bit

longer. What I do is I kinda push as I'm taking that stitch. That just makes it a little bit longer. Sometimes you have to do the opposite where you think that the straight stitch is gonna go too far and you can hold back a little bit and it shortens that straight stitch. But it's just a little bit of fudging is all you ever need to do and it's because we have this small length on our blanket stitch. The next thing I do now is I'm going to lift the presser foot and I'm gonna turn the applique piece so that that bite is going to be perpendicular to that point. Sometimes if you look at the back of the foot, that's the direction the bites taking. If you concentrate on the back of that foot, you can see this is not the correct direction, this is not the correct direction, but right about there is just perfect. And, again, great point. (machine whirring) I'm going to continue stitching until I reach where I started. I'm going to lift my presser foot, take my needle out, and I'm going to end with another eight to 10 inches of top and bobbin thread. Now we need to deal with our thread ends, our starting and ending threads. I am pretty fussy at this step. What I wanna do is I wanna take the two top threads and I wanna bring 'em to the back and tie them with the two bobbin threads. I have a really easy way to do this. What I'm gonna do is I'm going to use that self-threading needle that has actually an opening at the top and I'm just gonna pop those threads onto that needle and I'm gonna bring those back at exactly the right spot. Now I have the two top threads with the two bobbin threads and I'm gonna tie those once, and then I tie them a second time. So a little double knot. Then what I'm going to do, because I'm using a darker thread and my background is light, if I just clipped those threads with a little tail, they might shadow. What I'm gonna do is I'm gonna take that needle again and I'm gonna bring all four of those threads onto that needle and I'm gonna bury them under a few bites of that blanket stitch. Now I can clip those threads and they'll never shadow. And the back of your piece looks as neat as the front of your piece. (machine whirring) Now I'm gonna show you how I stitch inside points, which are very similar to the outside points, but visually I think you might like to see that. I'm gonna stitch my purple flower. It has eight inside points, so you will get pretty good at these inside points after you practice enough of these. My needle is in the bite position and I like to start with the needle in the right hand position of the blanket stitch. (machine whirring) We're stitching around a tighter curve so you might be noticing that I'm pivoting every stitch pattern. That is important to stay snug along the edge of the applique. I'm getting closer to this inside point, and it's a little hard to see, it gets kind of tucked away, but it's right about here. It's a little tricky to see, but you can get it if you look closely enough. This is right where we're gonna do our pivoting so that that bite is, again, perpendicular, but now it's an inside point that we're going for. I'm counting through my stitch pattern again. I'm headed into my straight stitch, which is gonna take me to that inside point. I'm gonna pivot again so I'm perpendicular. I bite in and I bite back. Now I'm gonna come around the next petal. I'm gonna continue stitching around this whole flower in the same manner. (machine whirring) Here we are at another inside point. This one isn't ending up quite as perfect. I might have to push a little bit to get that straight stitch to go just a little farther and I got it, perfect. (machine whirring) I'm all set with this flower. I'm going to deal with my thread ends. You wanna remember to bring those threads to the back and tie them off after each applique you stitch. You don't wanna wait to do that until after they're all done because all those bottom threads get sewn in and it's a big mess. If the back of your piece looks perfect, just think what the front will look like. The final thing I'm gonna show you in the stitching is stitching a circle. I'm going to go ahead and start anywhere on the circle. I'm gonna make sure that needle is in the background with my pattern begin. I'm gonna start stitching. What happens on circles is that you end up pivoting frequently. I wanted to talk a little bit about a detail that I like to think about that has me able to stitch more perfectly along this tighter curve. If you think about it, one of the

things that I said was I always do my pivoting with the needle in the background or the right hand swing of the stitch. When you really think about that blanket stitch, there are two spots that you can pivot that are in the background. You're going to bite in and bite back, that's in the background, and you're gonna do the straight stitch, and it's still in the background. I like to pivot after the straight stitch because I can make that bite perpendicular to the straight stitch at that point, so you have that angle just right. It's a little detail that can just perfect things a little bit. I'm gonna talk through the stitch, and this is gonna sound a little annoying, but this is what I'm talking about. If I were to say each stitch, I am biting in, bite back, straight stitch, pivot, bite in, bite back, straight stitch, pivot, bite in, bite back, straight stitch, pivot, bite in, bite back, straight stitch, pivot, bite in, bite back, straight stitch, pivot, bite in, bite back, straight stitch, pivot, bite in, bite back, straight stitch, pivot, bite in, bite back, straight stitch, pivot. You can also, if you think about the back of that foot, which is the direction that that bite is taking, always think about that going to the center of that circle, just an imaginary center to that circle, and that will get it even more perfect. (machine whirring) Let's take a look. I think it looks great. I think they're all biting right straight into the center, all the way around. It takes a little more time to do that pivoting every stitch pattern, but it's well worth the results. We're gonna bring these threads back just as we've been doing all along. You're probably getting pretty good at this by now. It takes a little bit of practice. When I bring the threads back on the circle, this is not a thread that's against the main background and I can just tie my double knot and clip those threads because nothing's gonna shadow. Those threads aren't gonna shadow because there's a flower here. On this edge they would. They would show on that nice white background. I'm picky, but there is a stopping point where I don't have to be that picky. Now we've completed all of the basic of the stitching and you can go ahead and stitch the rest of your applique pieces on your practice and then we'll move on to the actual block.

Lay out and fuse applique block

- You have all the information you need to prepare your fusible applique. I am using a different method for some of my main stems. I use a method called straight stitch bias stems. And I started using this technique on applique borders that had long vines and it was a little awkward to use a fusible technique. And it's a little bit easier to use this method, cutting a strip on a bias, hand-basting it, and then hand-basting that to the main background. And then instead of a blanket stitch, we use a straight stitch. It looks great, it's very reminiscent of some of the antique quilts that I love that use a machine applique. Let me show you how I do my bias stems. I want to take my fabric for my stem. This is a little smaller than you might use, but it's a good way for me to show you how to cut on the bias. This is your salvage edge, and we're gonna fold that salvage edge up at a 45 degree angle. And I usually do a little crease. And I'm gonna turn it so that I can go along one of the lines of the mat board. And I'm gonna get my cutter and my ruler, and I'm going to cut on my line on the mat board. I cut the little fold away. And I like to use one inch as my measurement for my bias stems. And I think this makes for a nice finished size. And it's the most frequent size I use for these stems on my applique quilts. If you cut it a little bit wider, you'll get a little bit thicker stem. If you cut it a little bit narrower, you get a little bit skinnier stem. But somewhere in the range of one, one and an eighth, seven eighths of an inch seems to be good for these stems. The next step is to hand baste these. The way I do this is I turn up the bottom edge about a third of the way and then the top edge comes over the top of that. So basically you're folding this in thirds, but you want to make sure that the edge that you folded down from the top, you want to end that a little shy of your bottom fold so it never shows from the front side. And I'm gonna take just a needle and thread, just a hand sewing needle. And I typically use a thread that doesn't match the fabric color. And what

that does, is it reminds me that I have basting stitches here and I'll eventually take those out. I don't want to forget them and leave them in the finished quilt. I'm going to baste this right down the middle and I keep folding up and then the top comes over. And I'm gonna baste this all the way down. And you would just look at your pattern, the PDF pattern and you can figure out the amounts and the sizes that you'll need for the stems. I've used, I think three different fabrics for these stems. The reason that we're using a bias is that we want to be able to curve these stems easily. And if it were on a straight grain, it would be very difficult to do our nice little gentle curves. With a bias, you can do really deep curves also. So it's just a really great technique. I used to use this when I was a hand appliquer, and then I would hand applique instead of the machine stitching that we're gonna do. And you can see it moves along pretty quickly. Once you're done hand basting your bias stem, take it to the iron and press it really flat and we're ready to use them on our project. You will want to have all of your fusible applique prepared and your bias stems ready to go on your background. I want to have my background square cut a little bit bigger than the size that we need to piece into our project. Our project is 18 inches finished. It's an 18 inch square. And I'm gonna add a couple of inches to each of those measurements. So I cut my background square 20 inches square. And I want to make sure that that background is starched. And remember you might need a couple of applications of starch to get it to have that stiffness of kind of a weight of lightweight paper. The reason that I cut the background bigger is it gets a lot of abuse along the edge when you're doing the stitching and you get kind of fraying along the edge and sometimes distortion. And that's a really hard edge to piece into the quilt. So we get all of the stitching done and then we'll cut that background square down to the size we need to piece into the project, which would be 18 and a half inches. I want to use my pattern, the right side. This is my original pattern, the one I wrote right side on, not the one that's a mirror image. That's the one that we use for drawing our applique on the fusible. I want to lay my 20 inch square on top of the pattern and I'm gonna center it. I have a nice light background and I can see that pattern through here perfectly for placement. If you have a dark background or busy print, you're going to need to use your light box. Lay the pattern on top of the light box and then your fabric on top of that. And even with black, you can see through it for positioning just perfectly. If you don't have a light box, although I think every machine applicator should have one. You could use a tracing paper overlay, you would draw on tracing paper the pattern and just lift up and place the pieces under the tracing paper. Fortunately for me, we have a light background, so it's gonna be really easy for us to set this up. The next thing that we're going to do is we are gonna draw placement lines for those bias stems. And this is the only thing that I actually draw on the fabric. Because I have to pick this up a little bit to do some of the stitching of those bias stems and sometimes I move it around a little bit too much to remember where the bias stems should go. I'm gonna mark those placement lines with a fabric pencil. I don't want to use a regular lead pencil because in case I need to take these lines off for some reason. I can always get a fabric pencil off. Basically we're gonna draw the placement line down the center of that stem and I put a little mark where it meets the flower and this one where it meets the other stem. And that's the size that I'm going to need to make that stem with a little extra on each side. Because that is an underlying edge. If you look at the pattern, there's those little double lines that indicate an underlying edge. Take one of my stems that's prepared for this stem, and I actually kind of lay it along that line. And I'm going to cut this side so it's a little bit longer here. And then I'm gonna come back over to this side and this one I cut at a little bit of an angle. And it's going to fit right under the main stem. So that's how that looks. The one thing you want to make sure of is that you placed the raw edge side down. A few times I'd forgotten about that and that raw edge side, when I get all

done, is up and we don't want that. We don't want to see it from the front. I'm going to then pin along this line. What you're noticing is that line we drew is never going to be visible. You're going to center the stem right over that. Once I get this basted, we're going to baste this right down the middle again. These two basting threads, the one we originally basted the stem with and the one that's basting it to the background. They'll eventually come out after the straight stitch has been done. We'll leave them both in until we get that machine straight stitch done at the very end. One of the really nice things about basting the stem down the middle is that if you have anything that's gonna tuck under, those main stems you can just lift that up and you can tuck them under this area and they can be hidden right under there. So that's one of the nice things about basting it down the middle at this step. And we have our first stem basted down and we're gonna continue basting the remaining stems. I have all of my bias stems basted down. I wanted to mention that this center one is the last one to go down and the side ones lay underneath of it. So I did this stem, this one, this one, this one, and this was the last one to go down. And then I took it and I pressed it very flat. And we're ready to start placing our fusible applique pieces. We want to take the paper off all of our pieces. And then we start positioning them on our main background. I like to use my little tweezers again for kind of a final positioning to get it exactly right. I'm going to place this little branch that has lots of leaves on early on because it has an underlying edge and I have to put that down before I put my basket down. And this is kind of a floppy piece, you want to be very careful in the positioning of it. And it's nice, you can see how that pattern is real easy to see for placement. And that goes over there. I can start bringing some of my leaves in. And we want to make sure that the fusible side is down, just like that. And I'm gonna grab a few more leaves and just start positioning these. You can see, remember what I said about it's nice to be able to tuck those under my stem? So we just lift that little stem up and we're gonna continue to place that under that bias stem. And I'm just gonna continue working right along. And let's get a tulip. This is that underlying edge that I showed earlier in our practice piece. This piece goes down first and then we're going to lay our tulip on top of that. Actually there's two little underlying areas, the top one and then the little stem tucks under here. So we want to make sure it's tucked under there enough. Tucked under enough, but not too much. 'Cause you don't want a big fat stem kind of feeling that right in that area. I'm going to bring in this really pretty top flower and I'm going to start positioning that. And I've taken the paper off most of these just to save a little time as I'm positioning them. And I'm gonna come back with my tweezers and I'm gonna just tweak. I like the word tweak for doing this. It just sets there very nicely. One of the things that I like to do on some of my multiple layer unit flower, is I can do a little bit of the stitching before it's fused to the background. On a flower like this one, I can fuse the small flower, the circle, to the bigger flower, leaving the paper on the bigger flower. And then I can do some of this blanket stitching on the flower and the circle ahead of time, before it's fused to the main background. That's a 20 inch square and it is sometimes a little awkward to move that around the sewing machine, so if I can do any of that stitching ahead of time, it's a good idea. Once I get the stitching done, then I take the paper off and I can go ahead and position those pieces and fuse those down. Some fabrics it's a little hard to tell which is the right and the wrong side. Batik's solids, you want to wait to take that paper off it until you're positioning it on the background so you don't accidentally place this upright and then fuse that to your iron. You want to be really careful of that. And then this is the correct orientation for that one. Continue placing all of your fusible applique pieces. Now that I have all my pieces positioned on my background, before I fuse them down, I want to make sure I like how they look. And this is why I like to prepare all of the applique and lay it on the block. I don't want to go fuse a little bit here, fuse a little bit there, because I might not like some

of the choices I've made early on. And I want to look at everything. And I do a lot of auditioning. I bring in other colors of flowers, I see if I want to change things, and I don't find that wasteful at all. I think it's part of the whole process to like your project. And I've got lots that I tried for my block until I decided on this particular color choice and fabric choice. And you can see some of these that I have tried and I have decided against. So I thought, oh maybe I would like this fabric up in this flower. And I thought, you know, it's okay, but maybe it's a little too red for the rest of it. But until I see that, I won't know. So I want to kind of keep trying some different choices until I get exactly, the perfect appliques on my background. Here's another tulip that I tried and I thought, not quite right, I don't think I like that one as well. I tried different things in my basket and I thought, oh, I don't know, that's okay, but I think I like my pink better. And once I am happy with what I have chosen, then I can go ahead and fuse things down. And I want to talk to you a little bit about fusing a big piece like this that is not at your ironing board at the moment. I like to take my iron and I do what I call tack things down really lightly in place and then once they're tacked, I can move that to the big ironing board and iron for my 12 to 15 seconds in all the applique pieces. I don't want to iron on top of my pattern because even just a light tacking might cause those pattern lines to kind of transfer to the back of the piece. And I just don't want to do that. I'm going to just real carefully pull my pattern out and then I'm gonna take my iron. Usually I turn my iron off at this point, just so it's not extremely hot. And as I'm doing this little tacking, it's a fairly cool iron and it's just gonna tap everything in place. And that's probably enough of the tacking. And then if I pick this up real carefully, I can take it to the ironing board and I can iron everything in place with the proper amount of time and nothing's gonna shift. Now I'm at an ironing surface so I can turn my iron back on. I can use that wool to cotton setting and I'm gonna fuse every piece for my 12 to 15 seconds.

Stitch applique block

- Once everything is fused down, you can go ahead and do all of your blanket stitching on all of your fused pieces. On a fused piece like this leaf, I can lift this little bias stem up and I actually start stitching right about here and I'm gonna stitch all the way around and I'm gonna end under this stem. I can clip those threads and then I don't have to worry about pulling them to back and tying them off because we're gonna do a straight stitch right along here and that's gonna secure those threads. What I'm going to do now is I'm going to bring my block to the sewing machine and start doing my stitching, my blanket stitching, and what I like to do is I like to fold or package this big block so it's a little bit easier to manipulate at the sewing machine, and I'm gonna work on this blue leaf here first, and so I'm just gonna kind of bring this so that it's, I don't know, I kind of call it a little envelope and then it's just a little easier to manipulate once we get it to the sewing machine. I'm gonna bring my applique block into the foot and I'm paying attention to my threadings being behind the foot. I'm going to fold the little bias stem back so that I can start this blanket stitching under that stem and I'm good to go. You can even fold a little bit as you're turning this at the machine. What we don't want is any pull or drag. Having this drop off of the tray table can distort the stitches, and as I'm coming up on this side I'm gonna pull the little stem back and I'm gonna stitch underneath of that stem and then what I can do is I can just clip these threads and I'll go back and clip the back threads also, and when I stitch this straight stitch on the bias stem that secures everything so you didn't have to pull those threads to the back and tie them off. Then what I'm going to do is continue stitching all of the applique that I use my blue thread for. Once all the blue thread is done, I'm gonna switch to my green thread. I'm gonna do everything that's green, my leaves, some of my circles and so on, until I'm completely done with all the blanket stitch on the

project. The reason I do it that way is I don't want to be switching back and forth changing threads and bobbins all the time and it's the same blanket stitch, same method throughout, so we just stitch by thread color. After all of the blanket stitching is done, then we are gonna stitch those bias stems using a straight stitch, and I'm gonna show that to you next. The order of stitching my straight stitch for my bias stems are to do the side stems first, all four of these side stems because again, I can lift this piece up and I can start underneath of that stem, and then the last straight stitch stem that is done is the center stem that curves to the right. I'm going to show you on a practice piece and this is exactly what you would want to do at home because you want to practice you settings and make sure you understand exactly how to stay along that edge. I'm going to use a straight stitch for my straight stitch bias stem and this is pretty straightforward. It's really, really easy to do a straight stitch. I'm just gonna change a couple of things. I'm going to shorten the stitch length. An average length for a straight stitch is around 2.5 and I like to have it a little shorter. I usually, not really sure why I picked this measurement, but I love it. I use 1.7 and I like a little bit smaller length because it curves better. If you have a longer straight stitch it looks more broken as you're doing that and the second thing I do is I move the needle position slightly to the right so that straight stitch is about a sixteenth of an inch from the turned edge, and I'm gonna show you that now at the machine. I have my setting perfectly set for my straight stitch. I'm going to bring my applique into the foot. I'm still using an open toe applique foot and I have the right toe guided right along the folded edge of my bias stem. I moved my needle position over so that when I stitch I am about a sixteenth of an inch in from that folded edge. It's pretty easy to stitch these but you still do have to pivot occasionally. I like to use a matching color thread when I'm doing these. I'm using a slightly contrasting thread so you can see this. If you're not careful, it's quite easy to fall off of that edge to get too far away, so take your time. Pivot frequently. Typically at the end, I've already done the blanket stitch of a flower or some applique element. I would have to end my stitches and then pull those threads to the back and tie them off. I'm gonna just travel over to the other side and show you how to do the opposite side of this, and this I can do because we're just practicing and my straight stitch looks beautiful along that that bias stem. Once both sides are stitched, I can take the basting threads out. After all of my blanket stitch is done on my fusible applique, the straight stitch is done on my bias stems, I sometimes add some other little elements and one that's on this block is something I call a thread stem, and that's a stem that is too narrow to use fabric and we just use thread to make the stem and they're really fun to use. This is an example of a thread stem on my block and you can see it adds a nice little accent to our little bud that's out here. What I want to do on my actual block that I'm working on is to draw that line from the pattern, and again, I'm going to use a fabric marking pencil and it's really important to do this because sometimes I don't stay perfectly on that line when I'm stitching, and I want to be able to remove that line, and with a fabric marking pencil that line will wear off or you can use a little eraser to erase it away. This is a technique you really want to practice a few times before you do it on your actual block. I'm gonna show you how to do this on my practice piece. I'm going to use a zigzag stitch and what we're doing with this is actually a little couching technique. We're going to lay some threads down and we're gonna zigzag over that. The setting that I'm gonna use is about 2.0 width and .75 or .70 depending on your machine in the length and you can play around with this. You can have them a little thicker, a little thinner, but that is the settings that I'm gonna use to show you. The thing that I want to do first is I want to pull a length of thread out from my top thread and this is the thread I'm gonna use to couch, and if you needed a length I would say about a yard of thread and I'm just gonna set that to the side. I also want to draw on my practice piece that little line that I talked about, and I'm just gonna draw that.

I'm gonna kind of connect one of these berries to the flower. I'm gonna start right here and what we want on our actual piece is everything to be blanket stitched. This little circle isn't stitched yet on our practice piece and that's okay for practice. I am going to start by bringing the bobbin thread up to top and I do that by putting the needle down and back up one time. I pull a little bit on the top thread and that forces the bobbin thread up and I'm going to come back to where I started and I'm gonna put my needle back down. I'm gonna lift my presser foot up and I'm gonna pull those two threads in front of that needle and sometimes when the threads are separated like that I actually kind of wrap this around the needle from that direction. Now, this is two threads to couch and that's not quite enough to give it any dimension, so I'm gonna bring that thread that I sat to the side. I'm gonna fold this thread in half and now I have two pieces of thread about 18 inches each, but again, it doesn't have to be measured out, it can just be approximates, and then I'm gonna take this thread and I'm going to bring it back to my sewing machine and I'm gonna fold it in half again behind the needle and now what I have is six strands of thread to couch over and that gives me some nice dimension. I'm gonna bring all these threads together, I'm gonna twist them so that they stay connected and I'm going to put my presser foot down and this is kind of the tricky part because if I start sewing, the needle comes up and if I pull too much on those threads they'll pull away. I like to use my stiletto to hold those threads down and I hold my breath as I'm doing this and I get started, and oh, that was perfect, and I'm gonna try to follow that little line and I'm gonna gently curve this along that line, and again, this does take some practice. It's gonna take a few tries to get it right and I'm gonna end right there and let's look at how I did. Pretty good. I missed the line a little bit, but that can just be erased off of there, but doesn't that look beautiful? It's very dimensional. If I just did a zigzag stitch, I always say it would be a zigzag stitch trying really hard to look like a stem that would still look like a zigzag stitch. This with that thread underneath it, it gives it that dimension and it's just beautiful. We're gonna bring those threads to the back of our piece using that self-threading needle that we've been using all day. There's too many threads to bring these all on to this needle. I'm gonna separate them into two groups and I'm gonna bring them back into smaller groups of threads. I'm gonna bring this back right here and then I'm gonna do the same thing for the second group. Aren't these needles great? I just love them. And then, I'm also going to tie these in two separate knots, because if you tie the whole group together it would be really a bulky knot. So, I'm gonna tie one side and I'm gonna take and put those on the needle and I'm gonna bury them in one direction on my bites of my blanket stitch and I'm gonna clip those off, and then I'm going to take the other group and I'm gonna tie those in their little knot and I'm gonna bring those on the other side. We've got one that got a little trapped and I've got a great little tip for that one, too, and I'm gonna bring those under here and I'm gonna clip those threads. This little thread is too short for me to handle real easily. What I'm going to do is I'm gonna already slide the needle under those stitches and I'm going to carefully just pop it in there and it's all hidden now, so that's great and we can see our beautiful little thread stem all taken care of. It looks great. I've added a really cute little bird to my basket block and you might want to do that also. The reason that I included this bird, I really like him, but it teaches a really great concept and I wanted to share this with you. The little bird is down at the corner of my basket and he's a really complex unit. He has lots and lots of little underlays and sometimes I do what I call build the bird off of the actual block first using either an applique pressing sheet or parchment paper, and I talk about that in the supplies. Those are items that you can fuse onto but it doesn't stick too permanently. I'm gonna use parchment paper because I like a little concept that works well with the parchment paper. Parchment paper is easy to find at the grocery store and I like the white. It also comes in some darker colors but this technique works

much better if it's in the white version. What I'm going to do is I'm going to go to my bird and I'm going to trace him on my parchment paper. I have also incorporated a little numbering system because he is a little complicated and I've done the order that these pieces are going to go down, so feather number one, two, three, foot four, his little beak, five, and then his body is six. Keep the numbers in the edging. If I put the number right here, remember we cut a little edging and that number would get cut away. So, this is the right side. What I want to do now is I want to turn this over and I'm going to draw my little edgings, again, from the backside or the reverse image. I want to trace on my paper back fusible web, again, on the paper side, all of the little bird parts and we want to draw all of these separately because of all of these underlying edges and we need to cut a little bigger all the way around. I want to include the numbers and I want to include the little double lines which indicate underlying edges and you can see that these little feathers have lots of underlying edges and that's what makes it a little complicated. I also am gonna draw a little arrow that indicates where the edging, little underlay, is gonna start and this one has just a little bit of a raw edge and almost all underlay. I'm going to then cut all of my little edgings. So, we've been doing this all day. We've got the little body of the bird. We've got feather number three. We've got feather number two. We have feather number one. We have the foot and we have his little beak. I want to point out that another thing I've done in this technique is the eye is done in a simple reverse applique method, and what that means is I'm gonna cut his eye out. I'm gonna cut a little hole for his eye and I'm gonna lay a little piece of fabric underneath of it and the blanket stitching will be done in this direction and it can look like little eyelashes. So, it's very cute. It makes him even a cuter little bird, and then I'm gonna take all of those little edgings and I'm gonna fuse them to our fabric. So again, I have my feathers fused. I have the foot and the beak and then the body. I want to have you watch me cut all of these little bird parts out because the underlying edges are kind of confusing and I want you to see me do that. Feather number one has just a small amount of raw edge, mostly underlay, and where that little arrow is I'm gonna come out and I'm gonna leave about a quarter inch of extra fabric for that underlay. So, there is feather number one. Feather number two has a longer side of raw edge and right where that little arrow is is where I start my underlay. That's feather number two. Then I'm going to do my feather number three and its little underlay is just one side. Feather number three. Now I have my little foot that is a funny little shape but pretty cute, and this side is all raw edge and then the underlay is just at the top, so there's my number four, and here's my beak. This beak is pretty little so you don't want to lose track of it and I'm gonna lead the underlay right about here and I'm gonna set that aside so I know right where it is and now we're to the body of the bird, and I'm going to just cut carefully this little eye out, so we're basically cutting a hole in the bird. So, instead of appliqueing a circle on top of his body we're going to put a little underlay behind his eye. So, right now it looks like he just has a little hole for his eye. The next thing I'm going to do is build the bird at the ironing board using my iron. I want to bring my parchment paper over to the ironing board. I'm gonna put a white piece of paper down so that you can really see clearly what I'm doing and I want to turn the parchment paper over and I want to be on the right side to set this little guy up. I'm going to pin the paper so it doesn't shift around as I'm working. Now, I'm going to build the bird starting with feather number one. Don't take the paper off until you're ready to use that piece because you want to pay attention to that numbering system. I'm gonna place feather number one following the lines on the parchment paper and I can iron right on that parchment paper and I'm just gonna tap this down for a couple of seconds and I'm gonna do feather number two and I'm gonna take that paper off and with tweezers this is really easy to position. I'm gonna lay that down and now I'm gonna do feather number three and I'm gonna lay

that down. Basically, we're fusing the fabric together. It's gonna stick where the underlays are. I'm going to find my foot which is number four and I'm gonna take that paper off and position that and now I've gotta find that little beak that's very hard to hold onto, and you definitely need tweezers for this one and you want to be real careful as you fuse that one to the paper, and the last piece I'm gonna put down is his body and what I want to do is I want to position his little body here, and before I fuse him down I'm gonna take a little piece of fabric and I'm going to lay it underneath of his little eye hole, and I found a fabric that had a little black dot so it looks like he really has an eyeball. Isn't that cute? And now I'm gonna fuse the body. I'm gonna let this cool and I am going to just peel him off. I've gotta let him cool a little bit. If you take it off before it's cool he might start to separate, and I'm just gonna peel him away. He comes off very nicely and I have this cute little bird that's constructed perfectly, and now I can put him on my main background. Be sure to slide your pattern underneath so you have him positioned just perfectly.

Chapter 4 - Finish

Add borders, quilt, and bind

- Once your block is finished, it's time to add the borders. First, we need to cut the block down to the size that we need to piece in to the quilt. Our block's finished size will be 18 inches, so we need to cut our block down to 18 1/2 inch square. Be very, very careful when you do this. You don't want to cut this too small. That would be so sad after you've done all of this stitching. I always measure twice, cut once. Sometimes I lay it on top of the pattern for some extra guidelines to make sure that I have it just right and centered perfectly. Once that is cut to the right size, we can add the borders. Please refer to the PDF for the exact sizes that you're gonna cut these borders. I have used a small inner border and then a larger outer border. We're going to add the top and the bottom of the inner border and then the two sides, and then we'll add the top and bottom of the larger, light blue border and then the two sides. We're gonna press those seams towards the border. Once you're done with that, it's ready to put into a quilt sandwich to quilt. ^Let's look at our block that we've completed. ^Turned out so beautiful. ^I chose to use this for my binding, I think it will look beautiful along the edge, and I chose this fabric for my backing. I have some quilts that are already quilted using basket patterns that I'd like to show you for some inspiration for quilting. This is a nice, nice little basket project that's very similar in size to the project that you've been working on, and you can see this one's quilted. I like to quilt around each of the applique pieces and I also like to quilt within the applique. You don't want to have too many open spaces. I like to do a little filler, and I'm gonna do some stipple quilting and stipple variation to kinda accent my beautiful applique. Then, I love to use feathers for quilting, so my quilt projects often incorporate feathers in the border area. I think that this feather really, really looks beautiful in the border. I have one more finished basket block to show you, and it's very similar to the first one that you saw using lots of wonderful machine quilting techniques. Quilting around the applique, some stipple quilting, and a feather around the outside border. If you wanna learn more about machine quilting, you can watch my class on advanced machine quilting. I also have patterns for those two quilts that I just showed you, and they actually are named after my daughters, Ashley's Flower Basket and Jessica's Flower Basket. I hope you have enjoyed the techniques that you have learned and I hope you use these applique techniques on many of your future projects.