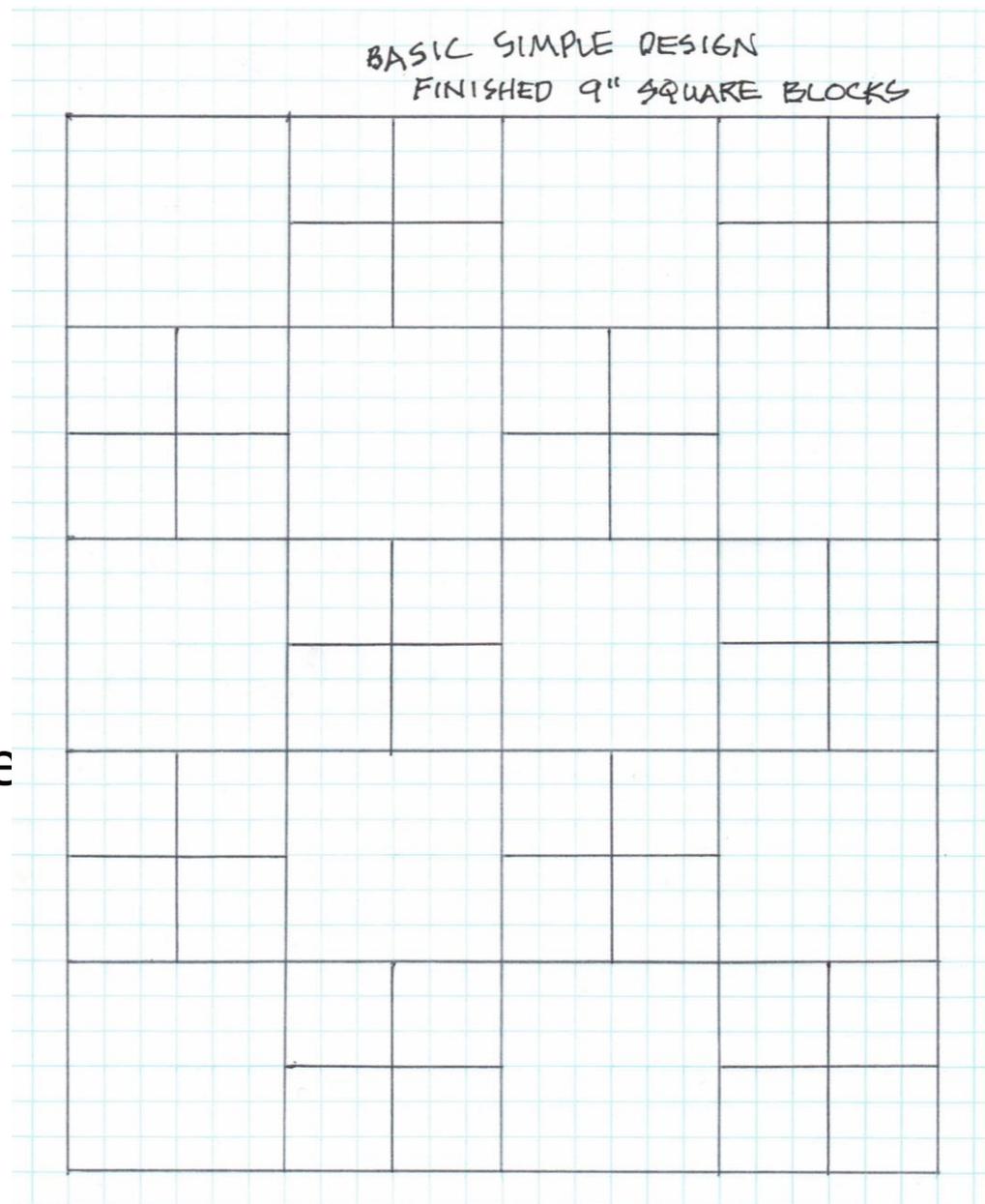


Making a Small Quilt for Donation

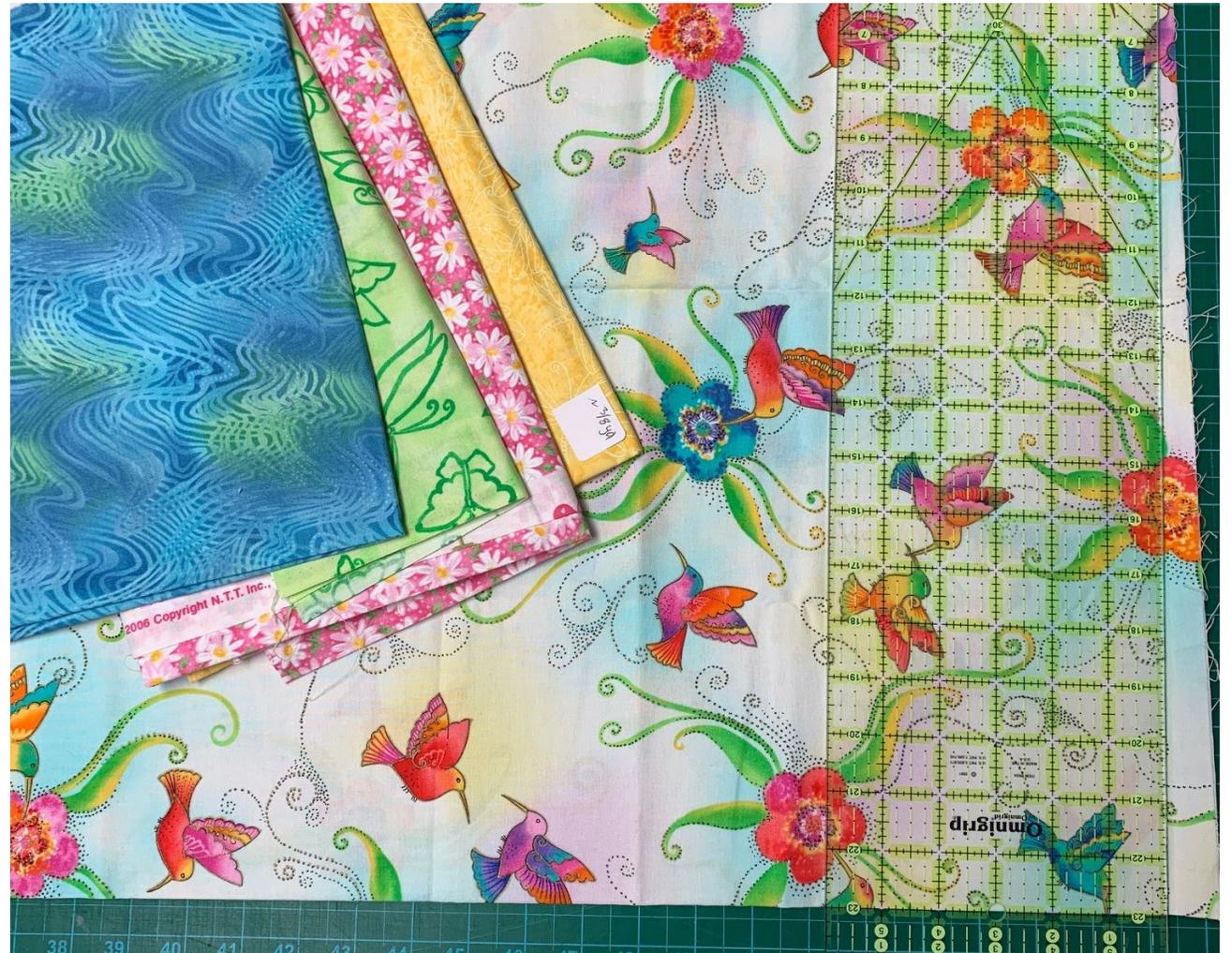
- First, some basics:

1. Plan your quilt design and make sure you have enough fabric.
2. Pre-shrink your fabric by washing and drying in a hot dryer.
3. Seam allowances in quilt-making are typically $\frac{1}{4}$ " – not $\frac{5}{8}$ " or even $\frac{1}{2}$ ".
4. In your quilt design/plan, calculate all sizes as *finished sizes*
5. ...then cut out pieces with seam allowance added: A $4\frac{1}{2}$ " finished square would be cut as a 5" square.
6. Ideally, all pieces are cut so they are on the straight of grain within the quilt. Be mindful of directional prints before cutting.

Here is a simple basic design for a 36" wide x 45" long finished quilt (recommended for our Project Linus donation quilts.) It has 20 9" square finished blocks, 10 each of a plain 9" block and 10 each of a pieced block with four 4 ½" finished squares. The 9" blocks are cut 9 ½" square and the 4 ½" squares are 5" square.



I selected the bird and butterfly print for the 9" clocks and the other 4 prints for the alternate pieced blocks of 4 ½" squares.



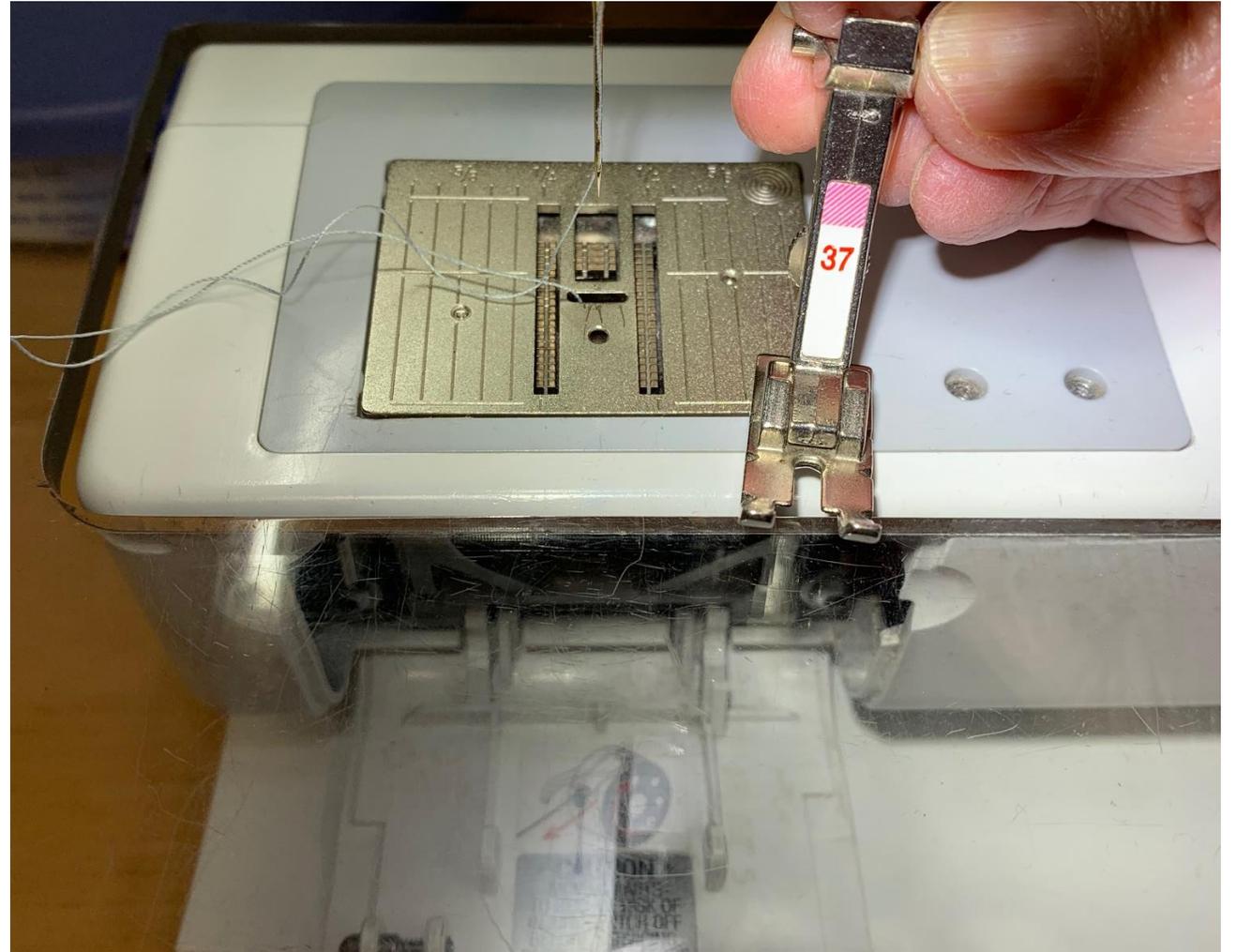
If you run short of a fabric to cut enough pieces for your planned block. Feel free to piece the blocks to make them big enough. This is one practical measure to get it done. (Don't do this on a quilt in a judged quilt show for competition. The judge won't like it!)



These are the two blocks I needed to make. To cut the blocks, I chose to use a 12" square cutting ruler and a rotary cutter, but you can also make a cardboard template 9 ½" x 9 ½", draw around it with a sharp pencil on the wrong side of the fabric and cut out the 10 drawn squares, then repeat with ten 5" square of each of the 4 other fabrics.



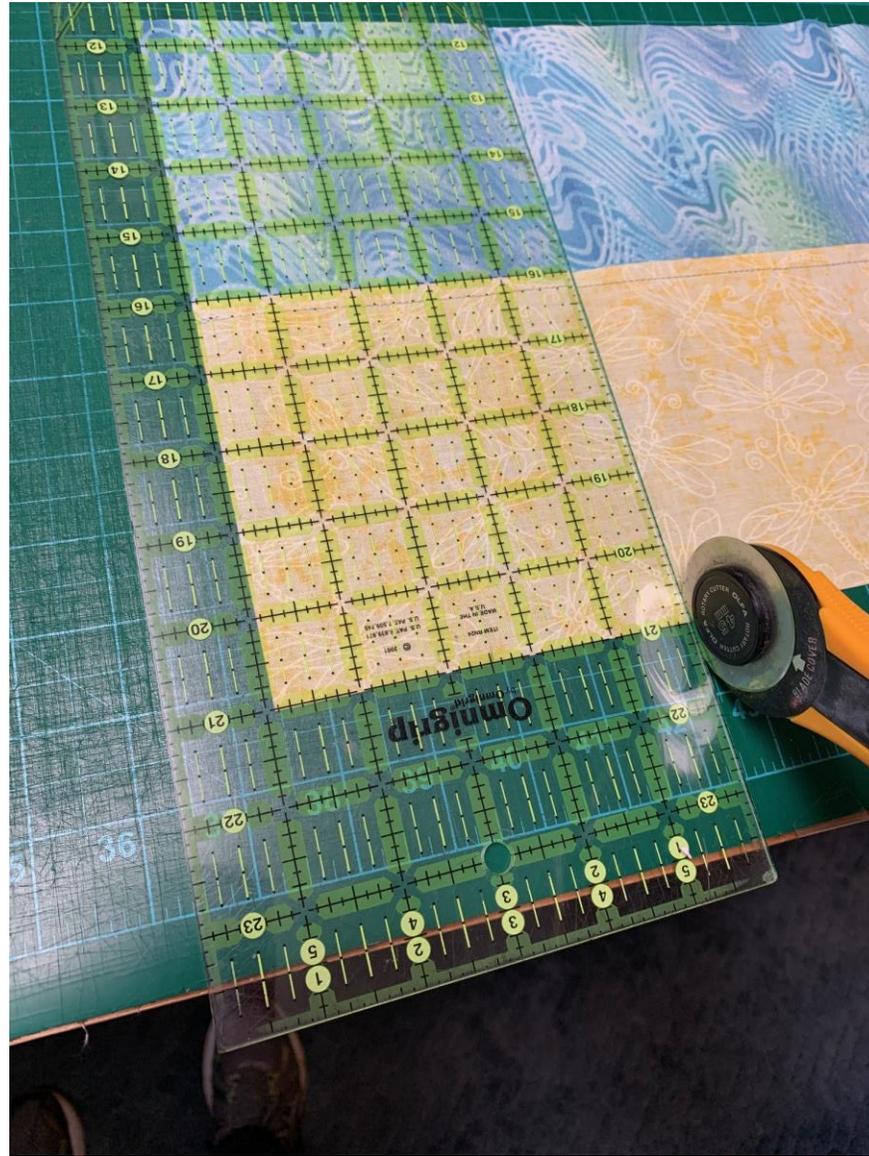
To make my piecing more accurate, I switch my sewing machine foot to a $\frac{1}{4}$ " foot. For my Bernina, this is foot #37. As far as I know, all other sewing machine brands have $\frac{1}{4}$ " feet.



Since I was cutting with a rotary cutter, I decided to speed up the process by cutting one 5" wide strip of each of the four fabrics and making strip sets out of each pair of fabrics for the pieced squares. I sewed a blue and a yellow strip together with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance and pressed the seam to one side, then repeated with the green and pink strips.



My next step was to cut ten 5" wide segments of each of the two strip sets. If you are rotary cutting, make sure you put a crosswise piece of your cutting ruler on the seam to make sure you are cutting at a right angle to your seam.



Now I am ready to sew the two 5" wide strip set segments together with a ¼" seam to make a 5" square. (Remember, without its outer seam allowances, it will be a finished 4 ½" square.) Notice that the two seam allowances face opposite directions. This is a trick called "opposing seams." It will insure the your seams match in the center of the square.



When you are ready to sew the two halves of each pieced square together, butt the two “ridges” together formed by the seam allowances being pressed opposite ways. Pin, sew and press this seam open. The seams will match perfectly!



Now you are ready to piece the rows together. Consult your quilt plan and sew the rows together with $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams as they are laid out in your diagram. You can create opposing seams by pressing the seams in rows 1, 3 and 5 in one direction and those in 2 and 4 in the opposite direction.



If you chose to add a binding to your quilt, skip this slide and go to the next. If, however, you would like to finish the edge of your quilt without binding, you may choose to sew the layers together like a pillow case, leaving an opening and turning it right side out and top stitching the edge. In this case, layer the quilt backing and top, right sides together with the batting on the top of this sandwich and pin-baste together. Now, turn the sandwich over and machine stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the raw edge. Leaving an opening about 12" long on the edge where you started. Trim the batting close to the stitching, turn the quilt through the opening, slip stitch closed and top stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge. Now proceed to pin baste and quilt as directed in slide 15.

Now you are ready to layer and baste your quilt. If the backing piece in your kit is not big enough, you may have to add onto it to make it a little bigger than the quilt top. A border for the back is a fine idea. You may have to use fabric from your stash to enlarge the back. If your backing fabric is directional and the fabric print goes sideways, you might want to turn it so it goes up and down on the back and add larger pieces of fabric from your stash to the top and bottom of the 36" high piece to make it about 47" high. Then trim the sides to about 38" wide.

I taped the quilt back - with the wrong side of the fabric up - to my cutting table (the floor works too,) covered it with the piece of batting provided in the kit and then positioned the quilt top on the top - right side up - completing the "sandwich." You may thread baste in directions radiating from the center or use safety pins, as I did, spacing them every 4½" or so.



Now you are ready to quilt your quilt. (I recommend machine quilting so these quilts can be donated before next year!) To keep a regular presser foot from pushing the three layers out of alignment, choose a walking foot for straight line quilting and a darning foot for free motion quilting.



There are many ways to quilt your quilt. You may do straight line quilting, stitch in the ditch quilt, free motion quilting or a combination of any of these. You may even choose to tie your quilts. I chose to stitch in the ditch (right in the seam lines) in all the seams, straight lines to form and "X" in the pieced blocks and free motion stippling in the large blocks.

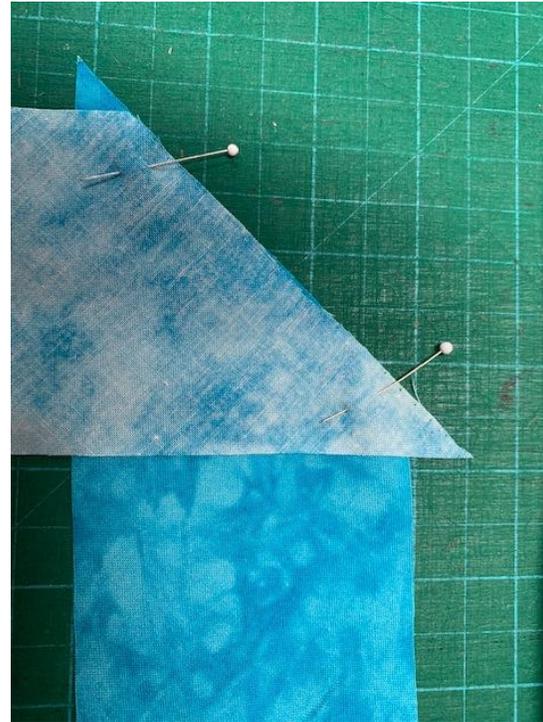
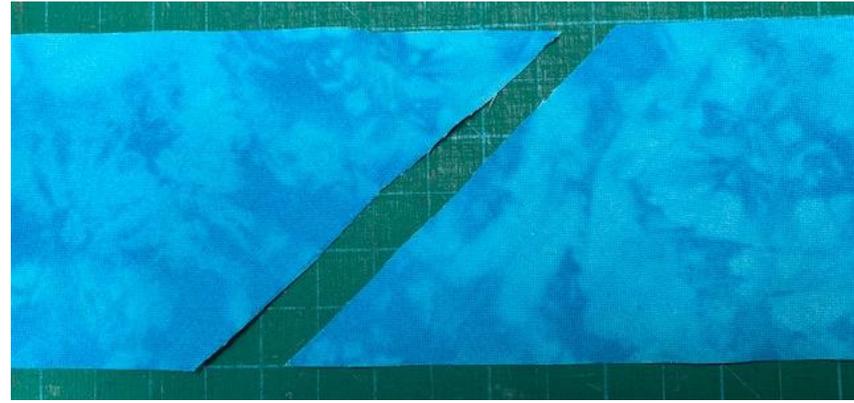


Before you bind your quilt, you will need to trim the extra backing and batting from the edges of the quilt. I did that with a 24" long cutting ruler and a rotary cutter.

Choose a binding fabric that will enhance the design of the quilt. Then cut it into bias or straight of grain strips* slightly more than 6 times the width of the binding you wish to use for doubled binding, or slightly more than 4 times the width of your intended binding width for single layer binding. I chose to use doubled binding for a ½" wide binding , so I cut my bias strips 3 ¼" wide. I measured the edges of the quilt and made sure I cut enough binding to go all the way around it with enough to account for the seams to sew the strips together and for mitering the binding corners.

* Straight-of-grain binding will save fabric; bias will make it conform to the edges better.

After cutting 4 binding strips from my fabric, I sewed the pieces together to make one long piece of binding. Make sure you piece the binding with 45° angles (whether it is straight-or-grain or bias) so it will distribute bulk better. Pin right sides together, offsetting enough to stitch at least a ¼" seam allowance. Then press the binding-joining seams open to reduce bulk. Trim the points.



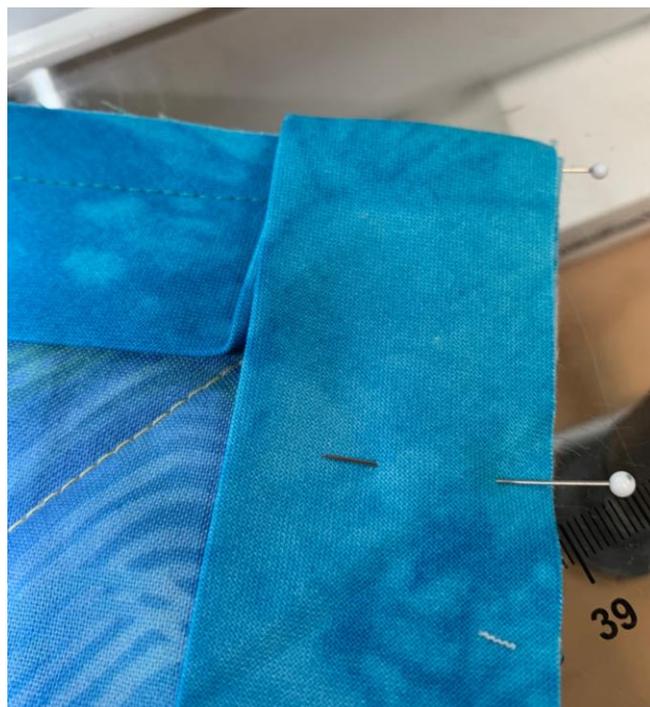
Fold the binding so that wrong sides are together and press the length. Start sewing on the binding not at a corner, but anywhere on a side of the quilt. Sew on the binding using a seam allowance the width of the binding you want to finish your quilt. Use the walking foot here again as the three layers including batting may enable layers to move and shift under a regular foot.



As you near the first corner, pin a mark that is the distance from the next edge of the quilt as the width of the seam allowance you want. In other words, if you want a $\frac{3}{8}$ " binding, stop sewing and back stitch $\frac{3}{8}$ " from the edge of the quilt you are approaching.



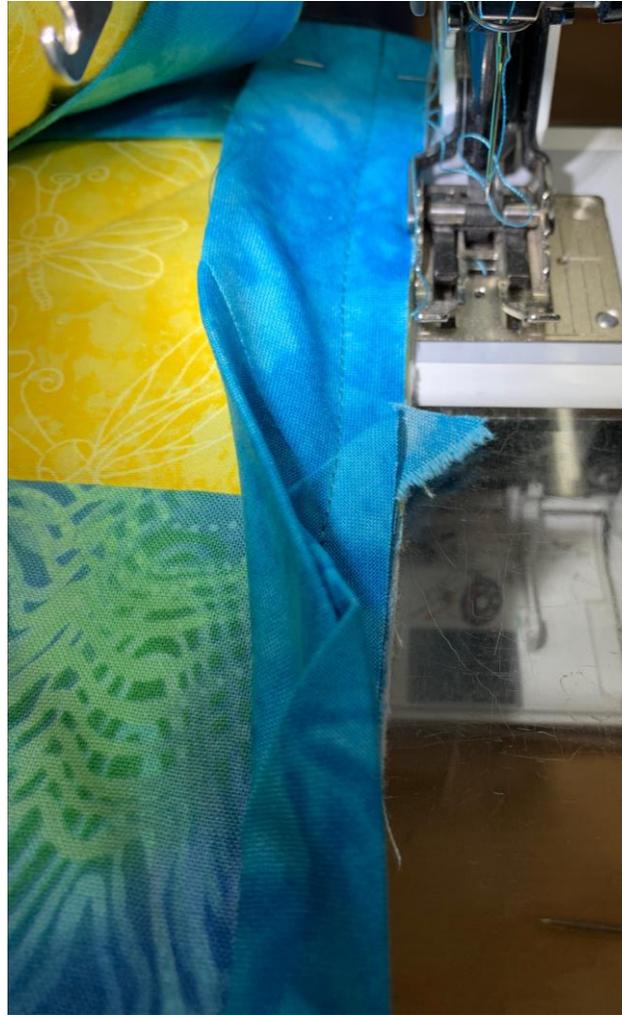
Now, fold back the binding on a 45° angle so that the raw edge of the binding forms a straight line continuation of the next side of the quilt. Pin in place and then fold the binding back along the next side of the quilt using the same seam allowance. Sew down the binding of this side and repeat the binding mitering at the subsequent corners.



Stop sewing on the binding when you are a few inches away from where the two pieces of binding will join. Finger press a $\frac{1}{4}$ " fold into the end of one of the diagonal edges of binding and tuck the other raw edge inside of the folded edge of the other. You will need to trim the length of the inserted edge so that it is inserted at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " inside the other, folded edge on. Make sure you trim the inserted end on a 45° angle.



Sew over the connection, checking first to make sure the angles of both the inserted piece and pocket piece are cut at compatible angles. Hand stitch the folded edge to the inserted edge with a tidy hidden slip stitch. Hand stitch both sides of the joining place on the folded binding.



I chose to hand slip stitch the back side of the binding down because I enjoy doing hand work. You may machine stitch the binding down by folding over the binding so it covers (by about 1/8") the line of stitching used to sew on the binding and stitch in the ditch on the right side, right in the seam that sewed on the binding.

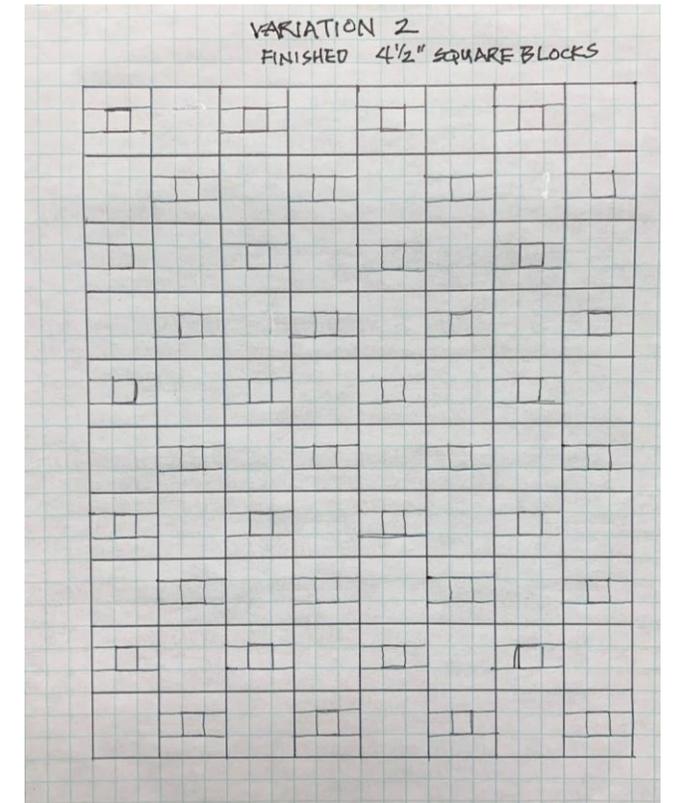
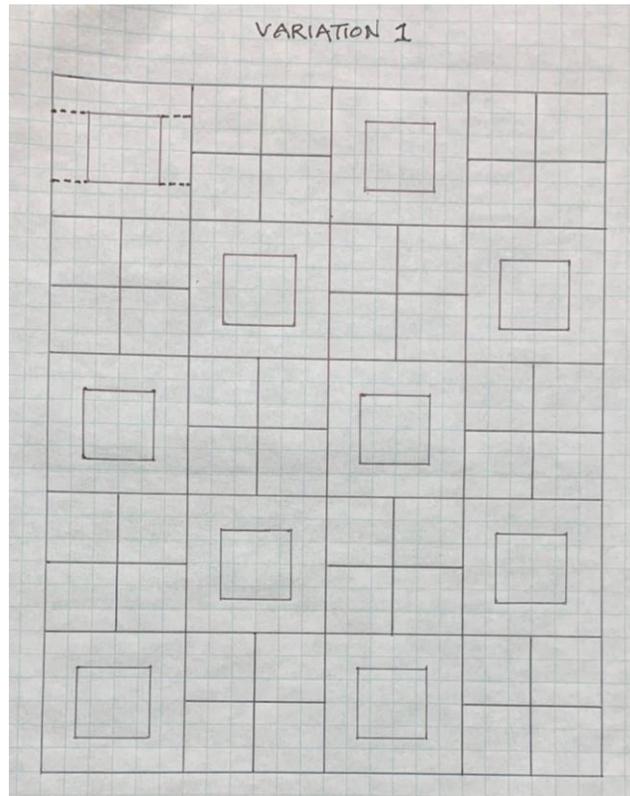


Here is the finished quilt.
Can you see why I chose the
turquoise blue binding?

There are many different
methods and decisions in
making a quilt. You can add
a border before you bind it,
but border fabric was not
added to your kit. If you
would like to add one, chose
a fabric from your stash to
compliment your fabrics and
perhaps size down your
blocks to keep the quilt at
about 36" x 45" with the
border included.



Here are just a couple of the many variations you could use with the same basic 9" block size to make a 36" x 45" quilt. Feel free to use other variations or your own design, your own fabric, or a combination of our kit fabric with your own fabric. Nothing is set in stone – even the exact size of the quilt.



Here's another idea:

If you have, or can find, a 1 yard piece of kid-friendly fabric, as I did, why not cut it a bit narrower to accommodate a border and still keep it smallish (mine ended up being 42" x 52", with the strip cut from the main fabric enabling me to make the corner blocks.)

This will go to my youngest grandson, who loves playing with heavy equipment truck toys, for his 4th birthday. Just one piece of fabric with borders and corners!

Have fun making small quilts!

