

Circle of Nine

by Janet Houts and Jean Ann Wright

Circle of Nine — A unique new system for arranging any nine quilt blocks into a creative quilt setting. You can use nine identical blocks, a combination of two or three blocks or nine different blocks for a circle of nine sampler.

A circle of nine setting uses spacers instead of sashings. Spacers can be cut from a focus fabric or they can incorporate patchwork or appliqué designs to enhance the quilt blocks.

There are 24 quilts in the book, each with fully illustrated easy-to-follow instructions.

This exciting new setting system for quilts is the design discovery of sisters Janet Houts and Jean Ann Wright, who are renowned for their innovative quilts featured by major fabric manufacturers and quilting magazines. Discover the fun of breaking out of the ordinary and enjoy the results of years of design expertise when making your next quilt.

Class Lesson Plans for Quilt Shops

Emphasis will be on color choices and block placement using spacers to create a quilt design. This is an opportunity for quilters to choose from their stash or a favorite fabric collection that needs a pattern.



Exploded diagram of Dot to Dot from page 42 Circle of Nine

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Preparation for Workshop

12½" quilt blocks work well for this workshop. Participants may select one of the 4 sample blocks provided (or they may bring 9 blocks of their own choice). They will need to sew the 9 blocks before coming to the workshop session. Accuracy in cutting and sewing the blocks is important.

Supply List

- Four to six 1-yard pieces of fabric that work well together to make the spacers that join quilt blocks together. These fabrics can also be used if pieced "spacers" are sewn to connect the quilt blocks.
- ¾ yard of designated spacer fabric
- 1½ yards of fabric for quilt borders.
- A design wall of 4 feet by 6 feet of batting, fleece or flannel and extra pins.
- Sewing machine and basic sewing supplies.
- Scissors, rotary cutter, cutting mat and rulers

To the instructors:

This is a design workshop for making quilts using a circle of nine setting

As the teacher of the class, take time to explore all of the options featured in our book, *Circle of Nine*, as you prepare class samples. Be sure to let your own creative ideas take flight so you can encourage your students to do the same.

This workshop flows nicely as an all day class and we highly recommend that you schedule the class for a single day with a break for lunch or a snack.

The circle of nine workshop can be taught as a morning and afternoon session or as two separate half-day sessions held on consecutive days or consecutive weeks. Each session is designed to last about 3 hours.

Consider having a social time about two weeks after the workshop so that completed quilt tops can be shared. Or, have a show and share wall in your shop to feature the quilts made in the workshop so everyone can see how different they all look. This will encourage future workshops using the circle of nine setting.

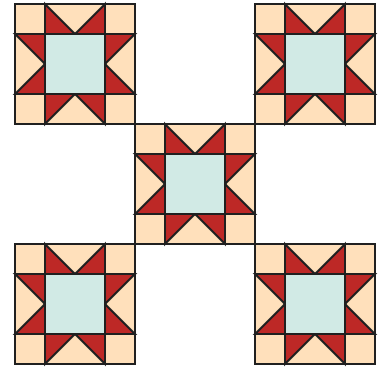
Workshop Session

Teacher preparation:

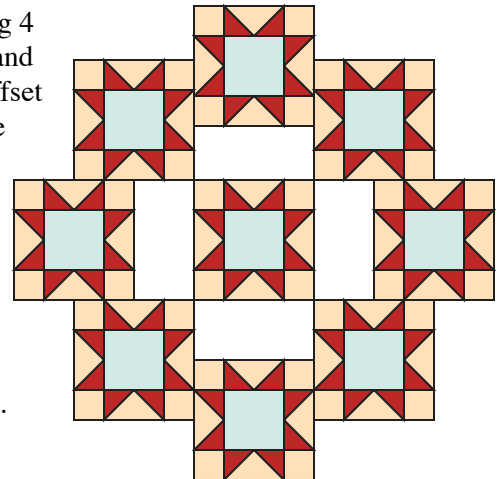
As teacher, we recommend having one completed quilt in the circle of nine setting **plus** 9 additional blocks that are finished. You should also have cut 4 fabric spacers and sewn an additional 4 pieced spacers to fit the spaces between the blocks for demonstration purposes.

Teacher Demonstration:

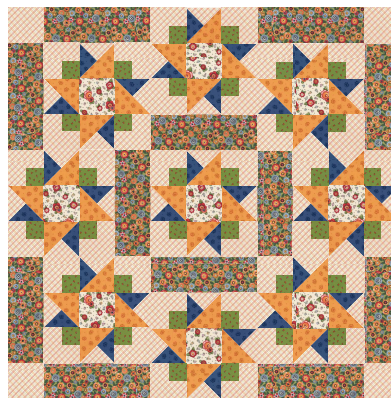
Using a flannel design wall, demonstrate how the circle of nine setting is created by placing one block in the center of the wall and then position 4 more blocks at each corner of the center block. This shows how the circle of nine design is created.



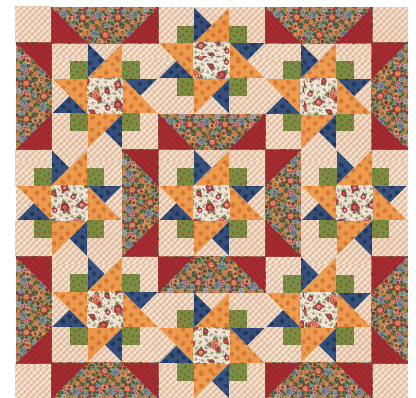
Now position the remaining 4 blocks to the top, bottom, and sides of the center block offset by the predetermined space that will accommodate your single fabric spacers.



Next place your pieced spacers on top of the single fabric spacers to show how they change the look of the quilt design.



Circle of Nine setting with single fabric spacers



Circle of Nine setting with pieced fabric spacers

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Workshop Action: Using the design walls (flannel sheets taped to the wall) brought by the students, have the students arrange their blocks in a circle of nine setting. With the graph paper printed from the Workshop Template pdf, have each student sketch a pieced spacer they might like for their quilt. The sketched spacer can be inserted between the blocks to show how the spacers will appear in the circle of nine setting. While we encourage the use of pieced spacers, plain fabric spacers can also be very effective. (If a student prefers applique, encourage the use of an available pattern from another source.)



It works well to have teacher and students move around the room as a group, so each setting can be discussed by all. This encourages new ideas and discussions about color and value. We recommend the teacher of the workshop stress 3 things... *fabric selection, contrast in color and contrast in value.*

This is also the time to select spacer fabrics. Have students audition fabrics from the materials they have brought to class and consider several options before starting to cut and sew their spacers. Again, this is a good lesson for group participation. After each circle of nine design has been viewed and discussed the sewing session can begin. We suggest they cut and sew just one spacer to begin with to confirm they are satisfied with their choice. Once satisfied they can cut and sew the additional spacers needed to surround the center block.

Twelve spacers are needed to fill in the open areas around the center block and to “square off” the outside edges of the quilt. These can be pieced spacers or single fabric spacers, or a combination of single fabric and pieced spacers. Pieced spacers can also be turned in opposite directions for an entirely different quilt design.



Pieced spacers are turned clockwise around the center block.



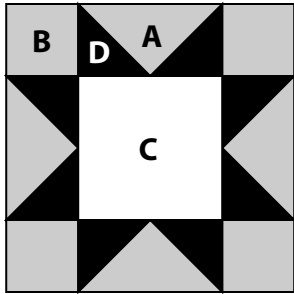
The same pieced spacers are turned 180° around the center block to achieve a different quilt design.

The corners of the outside spacers must also be determined – either square corner blocks or spacers on top and bottom may be extended to reach to the side edges of the quilt top.

Borders: Select one fabric for the inside border and a second fabric for the outside border. We recommend that the inside border range from a finished size of 1" to 2" and the outside border range from 4" to 6". Audition the borders to decide fabrics and sizes, then cut and sew the borders in place. Some students may need extra time to add the borders and finish their quilts as homework.

Group Discussion and Evaluation: Set aside about an hour at the end of the workshop session for a group discussion of each student’s spacer choices.

Sample 12½" Blocks



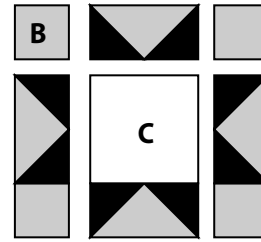
Sawtooth Star

Cutting Sizes for 1 Block:

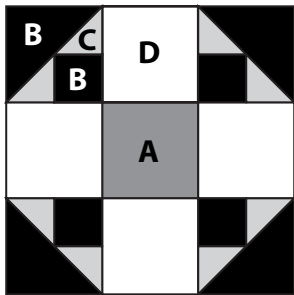
- Fabric A**
Cut (4) 3½" x 6½" strips
- Fabric B**
Cut (4) 3½" squares
- Fabric C**
Cut (1) 6½" square
- Fabric D**
Cut (8) 3½" squares



Make 4



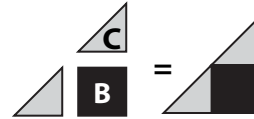
Assemble block rows
Make 9 blocks



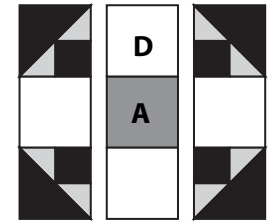
Album Block

Cutting Sizes for 1 Block:

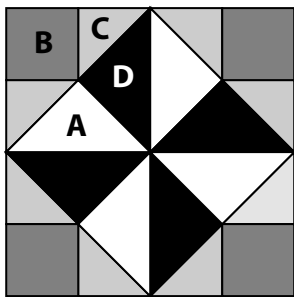
- Fabric A**
Cut (1) 4½" square
- Fabric B**
Cut (2) 4⅞" squares*
- Cut (4) 2½" squares
- Fabric C**
Cut (4) 2⅞" squares*
- Fabric D**
Cut (4) 4½" squares



Make 4



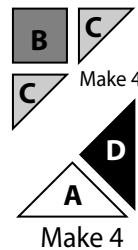
Assemble block rows
Make 9 blocks



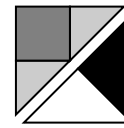
Windmill

Cutting Sizes for 1 Block:

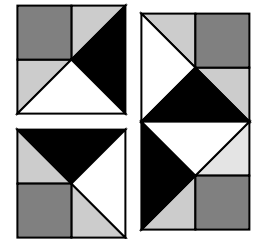
- Fabric A**
Cut (2) 7¼" squares**
- Fabric B**
Cut (4) 3½" squares
- Fabric C**
Cut (4) 3⅞" squares*
- Fabric D**
Cut (2) 7¼" squares**



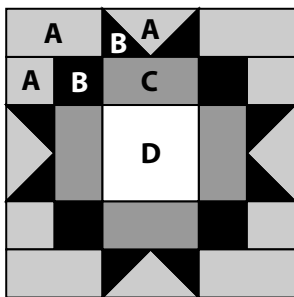
Make 4



Make 4



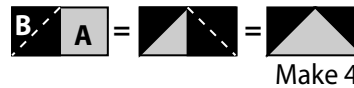
Assemble block rows
Make 9 blocks



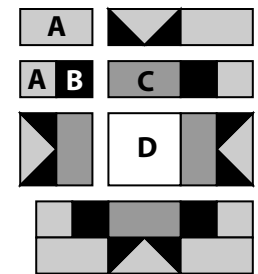
Maple Leaf Star

Cutting Sizes for 1 Block:

- Fabric A**
Cut (8) 2½" x 4½" strips
- Cut (4) 2½" squares
- Fabric B**
Cut (12) 2½" squares
- Fabric C**
Cut (4) 2½" x 4½" strips
- Fabric D**
Cut (1) 4½" square



Make 4

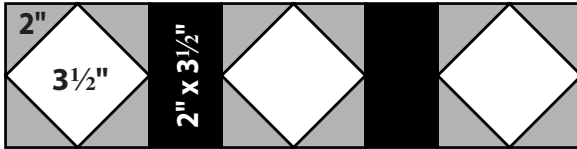
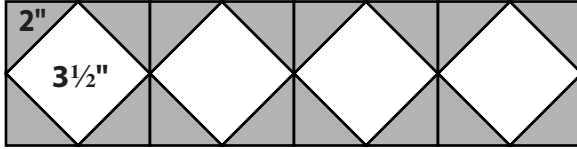
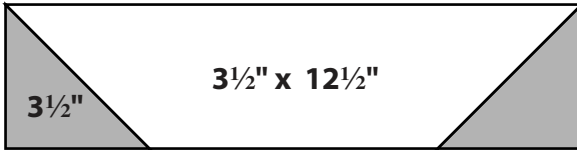


Assemble block rows
Make 9 blocks

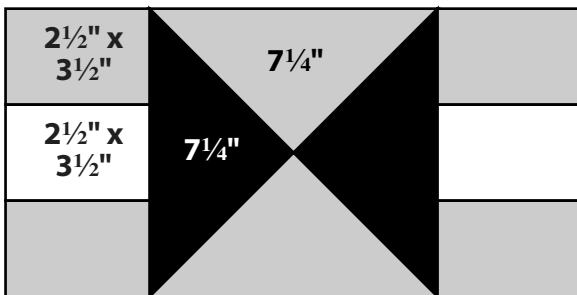
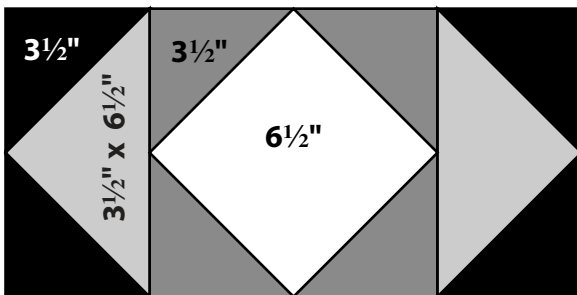
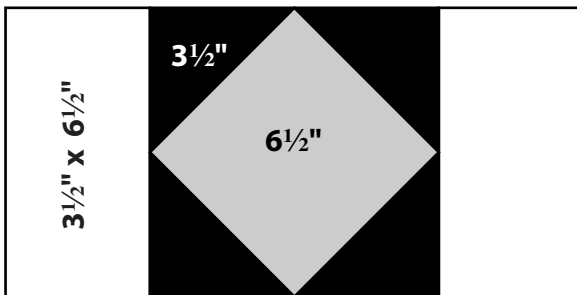
*Cut each square in half diagonally once to make 2 half-square triangles

**Cut each square in half diagonally twice to make 2 quarter-square triangles

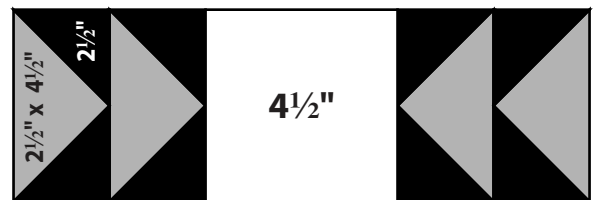
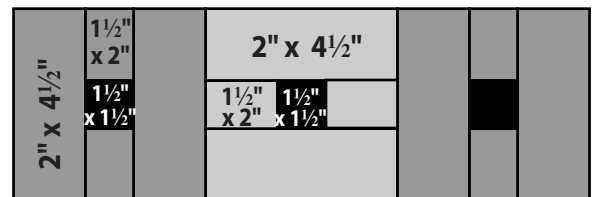
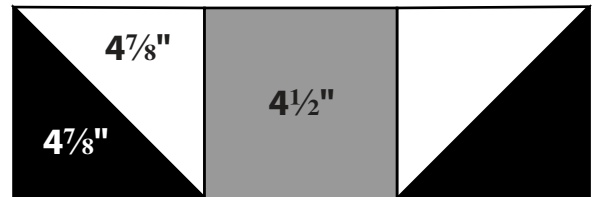
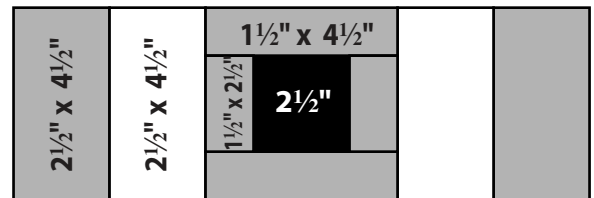
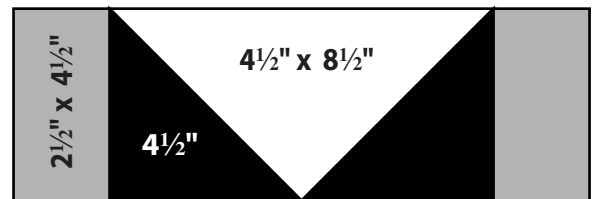
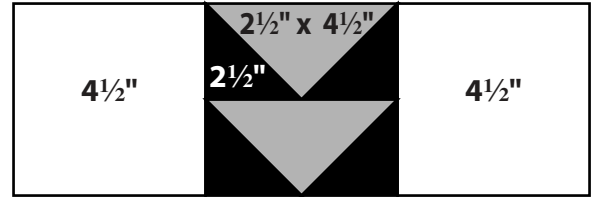
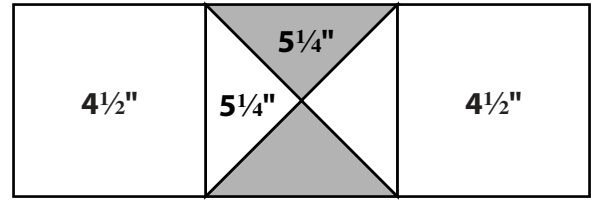
Sample Spacers – Cutting Size Measurements



3 1/2" x 12 1/2" Spacers



6 1/2" x 12 1/2" Spacers



4 1/2" x 12 1/2" Spacers

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