



Project Idea Starters



QUILTMAKING

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www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~idea

Use this two-page publication as the starting place for your 4-H Self Determined Project. You may choose to do a little or a lot depending on your level of interest in this topic. Use in conjunction with our 4-H 365, Self Determined Project Guide; available through your county OSU Extension office or by visiting our web page at www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~idea. Be sure to register your Self Determined Project with your county OSU Extension office.

Background

Many are the motivations for making beautiful quilts. Besides being made primarily to keep one's family warm in bed, quilts are made to celebrate events in our lives. The birth of a baby, a coming marriage, Christmas season, political events, and the development of the airplane have all been subjects for quilts. And quiltmakers made quilts to remember events that have made them sad or thoughtful. The AIDS memorial quilt commemorates persons who have died from the HIV virus. Today, people make quilts for all these reasons as well as for the sheer fun of it.

Quilting together with friends has a long tradition. Quilting bees provided Ohio frontier women opportunities for social contact. A "bee" was a daylong event. The hostess and usually seven guests attached a quilt top with its back and batting to a frame, and then they spent the day quilting, visiting, and eating together, often with husbands and sweethearts joining them for the supper meal. Today, quilt guilds and church quilting groups meet for work, fun, and support for individual members as well as those in need.

In the past, quilts were made by hand. Today many technologies are available to us. Cutting the pieces for patchwork can be done with shears or by rotary cutter. While hand-sewing and hand-quilting are traditional, sewing machines can be used as well to create quilts. And designing and coloring quilt blocks and whole quilts is done not only with pencils and colored markers but also with computers.

Planning Your Self Determined Project

Every Self Determined Project can be broken down into areas of interest. These are the specific things members wish to address during their project. Using your Self Determined Project Guide 4-H 365, identify at least three areas of interest, with at least three activities per area to explore. Take your ideas from the following list, or make up your own.

Areas of Interest and Things to Do

Quilts as Reflections of Ohio History

- Search the library for books about quilts from Ohio. Identify the earliest documented quilt and quiltmaker. Share your knowledge with your family and your club.
- List three quilt styles which predominated in each century of Ohio's history.
- Periods of history and social movements influenced styles of quilting; e.g., the Great Depression, the Victorian Era, the Westward Movement. List 15 quilt patterns and identify the factors which influenced the styles of those quilts in various periods of Ohio history. Make a scrapbook showing them.
- Locate the best-known quiltmaker in your town or city. Interview and write a story about him or her.
- Political quilts were a popular means of expressing the maker's position on a issue of the time. Learn about some of the events or opinions depicted in political quilts. Make a poster to show what you have learned.
- Visit your local Historical Society or Museum to see their quilts.
- Research the value of quilts. Learn about benefit quilts. Attend a quilt auction, an estate auction, or a garage sale AND an antique shop to learn about the value of old quilts in your area. Document what you have learned.
- Learn about and document how quilts are appraised from a registered quilt appraiser.
- Make a quilt block out of fabric—fused, pieced, appliqued, or embroidered—depicting your favorite historic quilt design.

Quilts in My Family

- Ask your parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles to show you quilts owned and/or made by persons in your family.
- Locate a reference book on quilt patterns to help you identify the names of those in your family quilts.
- Write an identification label for each quilt in your family. Include the quilt pattern name, the quiltmaker's name, and the place and date when it was finished. In addition, write down all other information you have about the quilt.
- Prepare a piece of washed muslin by ironing it to the shiny side of a piece of freezer paper for stability. Using an indelible pen, write the identification label information on the muslin. Remove the freezer paper, turn under each

edge of the muslin and carefully stitch the label to the quilt. Repeat for each family quilt.

- Identify a knowledgeable person in quilting to help you. Choose one quilt pattern from your family quilts and make a similar quilt block to use as a pillow top or a design for the front of a tee shirt.

Quilting Today

- Visit a quilt show or display. Write a journal entry about what you saw.
- Visit a quilt shop or the quilting department of a fabric store. Write a journal entry about what you saw.
- Learn about the basic tools and techniques used in quilting. Make a list of definitions to explain these items.
- Visit web sites or get books from the local library which show and explain quilts made by a variety of ethnic groups. Document the similarities and the differences.
- Take a quilting class at a quilt or fabric shop.
- Complete a quilt block using the knowledge you have gained.
- Complete a quilted project of your choice.

Make a Small Story Quilt

- Identify an event, picture, time period, or a dream you would like to celebrate on a quilt.
- Draw your design on paper, including measurements, to illustrate your story. Find fabrics and embellishments to help tell the story.
- Identify a knowledgeable quiltmaker to help you. With his or her help, choose fabrics for the background and design elements. Cut the patterns out of fabric and fuse or applique them to the background fabric.
- With the help of your quilting friend, finish your small story quilt.

Make a Conversation Quilt

- Victorian Crazy Quilts are pieced of random-sized patches of a variety of fabrics. Find examples of Crazy Quilts in quilt books at the library, a quilt shop, or a fabric shop. Study the stitches and embellishments used in these quilts, and make a scrapbook of your favorite examples.
- Fabrics are printed with many different themes. At a quilt shop or fabric store, find several different fabrics which represent themes of interest to you: e.g., cats, bugs, dolls, sports. Purchase small amounts of five to eight different fabrics which reflect your theme.
- Piece together your theme print fabrics as crazy quilts were pieced, or fuse them randomly to a piece of background fabric to make a small quilt.
- Embroider some of the Crazy Quilt stitches you found to embellish your quilt.
- Visit a bead or craft store to purchase beads to embellish your quilt.
- Attend a button collectors show, or purchase some buttons from a garage sale to embellish your quilt.
- Add ribbon roses, artifacts from nature, or personal mementos as embellishments to your quilt.
- Finish your small conversation quilt and share it with your family and club.

Resources

Persons

- Leita Shahan, 4-H leader in Geneva, Ashtabula County
leita@ncweb.com
- Darlene Gerber, 4-H leader in Geneva, Ashtabula County
dgerber@cepcarlisle.com
- Lyn Mosher, New Lebanon, Montgomery County
lynmosher@aol.com
- Gretchen Schultz, Maumee, Lucas County
tgchult@gateway.net

For other quilt mentors, contact a local quilt guild, quilt shop, or senior center to ask for assistance.

Books

- Clark, Ricky, George W. Knepper, and Ellice Ronsheim. *Quilts in Community: Ohio's Traditions*. Ohio Quilt Research Project, 1991.
- Cherry, Winky. *My First Patchwork Book: Hand and Machine Sewing*. A Palmer/Pletsch book for children
www.palmerpletsch.com/childrenbooks.htm
- Cherry, Winky. *My First Quilt Book: Machine Sewing*. A Palmer/Pletsch book for children.
www.palmerpletsch.com/childrenbooks.htm
- Lind, Joanne Larsen. *Quilts from the Quiltmaker's Gift*. Pfiefer-Hamilton Publishers. www.quiltmakersgift.com
- Paulson, Jennifer. *Refrigerator Art Quilts*. That Patchwork Place, Inc., 2001.
- Step into Patchwork—I'll Teach Myself*. Dreamspinners Discovery Series. www.dreamspinners.com/category.cfm?catid=7,8,13
- Weidman, MaryLou. *Quilted Memories: Celebrations of Life*. new book due out September 2001.

There are many books that tell stories about quilts. To find books for children and young adults about quilting in fiction, go to: www.nmt.edu/~breynold/quiltfiction_kids.html

Web Sites

Note: As you know, web sites come and go. For the most up-to-date information available, conduct a search on your internet connection, using the word “quilting,” “applique,” “redwork,” or “quilt history” and follow the leads there!

- **Quilting history, periods and styles:** www.womenfolk.com/grandmothers/grquilts.htm
- **Quilting topics from the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History:** www.si.edu/resource/faq/nmah/textiles.htm
- **Story quilts:** www.hipark.austin.isd.tenet.edu/arc/projects/fourth/quilts/quilt.html
- **Quilts from diverse traditions:** www.quiltethnic.com
- **Exploring the history of Ohio through quilts:** www.home.columbus.rr.com/bradshaw/abCurriculum.html
- **Geometric Design in Ohio Quilts:** www.decartsohio.org
- **AIDS memorial quilts:** www.aidsquilt.org
- **To find a quilt guild near you:** www.quiltguilds.com