

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

Blanket Stitch Red Dress: Instruction Sheet

Setting Up

Supplies Required (Per-person):

- Mini Red Dress Template;
- Red Felt (enough for two cutouts of dress [for front & back side], stiffer felt is ideal)
- 3-4 Quilting Pins;
- Darners Needle;
- 2.8 M/280 CM of Button Thread (contrasting shade recommended);
- Scissors;
- Tracing Utensil (Sharpie, fabric pen, dressmaker's pencil, or ink pen recommended);
- Optional: Embroidery Scissors (for cutting thread & fine detail trimming);
- Optional: Fabric Scissors (for cutting fabric out).

You will also require adequate lighting and a flat surface to work on.



This instruction sheet is Part 3 of the following resource package:

- Part 1: National Day of Awareness for MMIWG 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples Backgrounder;
- Part 2: National Day of Awareness for MMIWG 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples Resource List;
- Part 3: National Day of Awareness for MMIWG 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples Blanket Stitch Red Dress Instruction Sheet & Mini Red Dress Template.

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Overview of Steps:



1. Working with the Template;
2. Beginning Your Stitches;
3. Turning the Corner;
4. Adding New Thread;
5. Completing Your Red Dress.

Classroom Ideas:

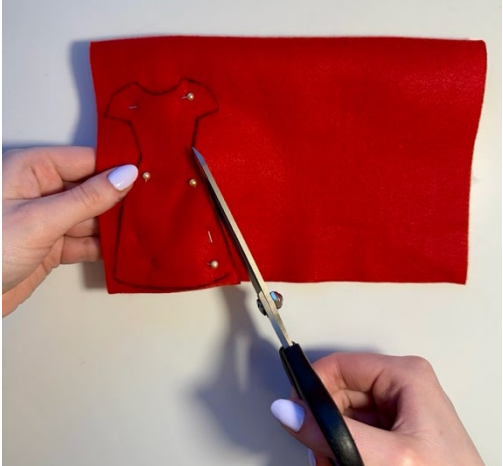

- If you would like to display the completed dresses, they can be hung on a clothesline with clothes pins or from a mini clothes hanger shaped from a paper clip (or other malleable wire material).
- Messages and/or pictures can be drawn on the dresses using a fabric pen. Adornments (such as gems, pins, and ribbons) can also be added on to the fabric.

Note: The blanket stitch can be used to sew a wide variety of items and shapes (which can be connected to key events, stories, dates etc.) and is not limited to creating a red dress. For example, the blanket stitch can be used to create plant and animal shapes, an orange shirt in recognition of Orange Shirt Day, a Holiday sweater to celebrate the Holiday season, a heart for Valentine's Day, a gift for Mother/Father's Day, etc.

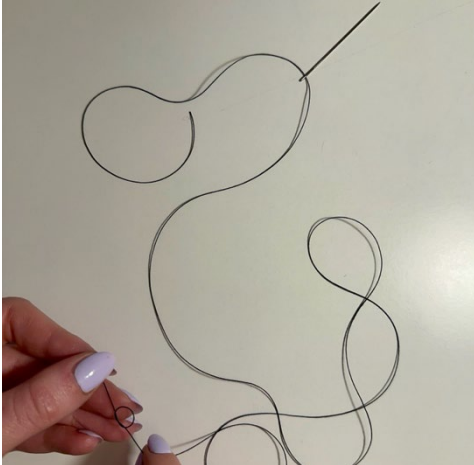
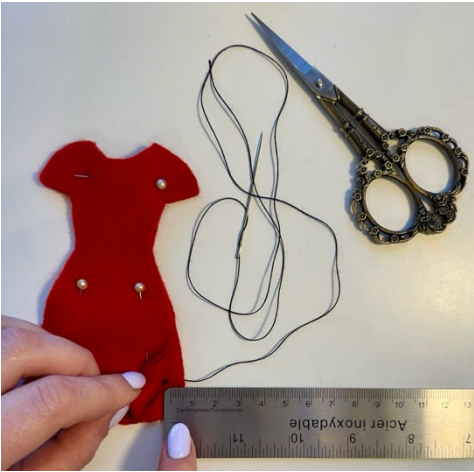
THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

Working with the Template	
	<p>Step One:</p> <p>Using the appropriate scissors (not fabric scissors), follow the black lines to cut out your dress template.</p>
	<p>Step Two:</p> <p>Compare both sides of red felt; one side is usually of better quality or if one side has markings, use it to draw your template on (since it will be facing the inside/hidden later in the process). Trace the outline of the cut-out dress template onto one piece of red fabric using your tracing utensil.</p> <p>Tip: place the dress template strategically onto the fabric to ensure that you are able to get the most out of the material you have. Leftover materials can always be used for other projects!</p>



THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

	<p>Step Three:</p> <p>Once the template has been traced onto a sheet of fabric, fold the fabric in half (lengthwise) so another layer of fabric is underneath your template (for the other side of your dress). It is recommended that you use quilting pins to pin your layers of fabric together before cutting. Using the drawn-on outline as a guide, cut out the dress shape through both layers of fabric simultaneously (so they are a matching cut).</p> <p>Note: One 12x8.5 sheet of felt folded in half can be used to make the double-sided cut-outs for two different dresses.</p>
	<p>Step Four:</p> <p>Once the dress has been cut, take out the quilter's pins (for now). Flip both pieces of fabric over and layer one over the other. Do you see how the pen markings used to trace your template are now hidden? Be sure to flip <u>both</u> layers of fabric over so the cut outs are still matching, or else they will be an opposite reflection.</p> <p>After the dresses are aligned, secure both pieces of fabric together using the quilting pins—this time, make sure the pins are further away from the borders of the dress so as not to obstruct your sewing pathway.</p> <p>Reminder: quilting pins are useful in preventing your work from shifting as you cut or sew.</p>

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

Beginning Your Stitches	
	<p>Step Five:</p> <p>Thread the button thread through the eye of your needle, leaving a long piece of thread on one end and a shorter tail on the other. Tie either a double or triple knot at the end of the long tail of thread.</p> <p>Tip: If you encounter difficulty, Youtube has many videos of needle threading “hacks” to assist you.</p> <p>Note: Black thread is being used here for added contrast in pictures.</p>
	<p>Step Six:</p> <p>Mark out the space where you will begin your stitching. This should be about 0.5 cm away from the edge/border of the fabric, following along the side of the dress.</p> <p>To anchor your thread, go in between the two layers of fabric and poke your needle downwards through the bottom layer only (this will hide the knot in the middle). Pull the thread all the way through the bottom piece of fabric until the knot catches.</p> <p>Tip: if the anchoring thread that is tucked in between the dresses is too long (i.e. it is sticking out), it can be trimmed using scissors.</p>

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

	<p>Step Seven:</p> <p>Bring your needle and thread through both layers of fabric starting from the top layer and going downwards until a loop has formed. Guide your needle and thread through the loop you created in the direction away from you. Pull your thread through until the loop has been closed in.</p> <p>Note: The blanket stitch is a decorative stitch and the stitching will be visible on both surfaces of the dress you are making.</p>
	<p>Step Eight:</p> <p>The next stitch should be about half an inch from your previous stitch and the border. Bring your needle and thread downwards (coming down from the top) through both layers of felt. As in the last step, continue to pull the thread without closing the loop that has been created until the loop is close in size to the circumference of your finger. Thread your needle through this loop. Pull until your stitch is resting nicely on the edge of the border.</p> <p>Tip: aim to have each stitch a similar distance away from neighbouring stitches and the border of the fabric (this takes practice)!</p>

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)



Step Nine:

Repeat step eight to create your next blanket stitch. Remember to thread your needle through the loop before closing it in.

Continue to repeat the blanket stitch along the side of the dress until you have reached the corner of the sleeve.

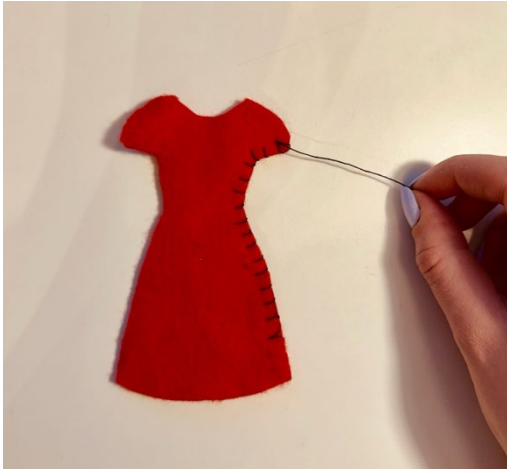
Turning the Corner



Step Ten:

There will be a set of three stitches to manoeuvre around the corner. The first stitch is no different than the stitches before it.

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)



Step Eleven:

For the second corner stitch, go downwards through the same hole (or axis point) as the previous stitch, however, allow this stitch to rest on an angle and sit on the very edge of the corner.



Step Twelve:

For the third stitch, go down through the same hole as the previous two stitches, but lay the thread at an angle to complete the corner. You should have three pieces of thread coming from the same hole but resting on the fabric in the formation of a triangle or tent. Continue on from here as you have been doing before you encountered the corner.

Note: as you make progress on sewing the dress together, feel free to remove the quilting pins in areas where you no longer require them.

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

Adding New Thread



Step Thirteen:

Once you have come to the neckline of your dress, you will need to tie off the thread in order to leave the neckline open. To do so, loop your needle and thread around the last stitch and tuck the thread in between the two layers of fabric. Poke your needle through the surface of one of the layers of fabric, careful not to poke the needle entirely through to the other side (this way, the thread will be both secure and hidden). Pull the entire thread through.

Tip: you may find it easier to tuck away your thread within the fabric if you remove the quilting pin going across the neckline of the dress.

Tip: if you notice at any time you are beginning to run out of thread, it is best to change it while there is still enough length to be able to comfortably tie the end off.

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)



Step Fourteen:



Your thread should be tucked in between the layers of felt now. Tie a double knot in the thread and trim the remaining length.





Step Fifteen:

Refer back to steps five through eight to begin a new thread at the other side of the neckline and continue on with the blanket stitch.

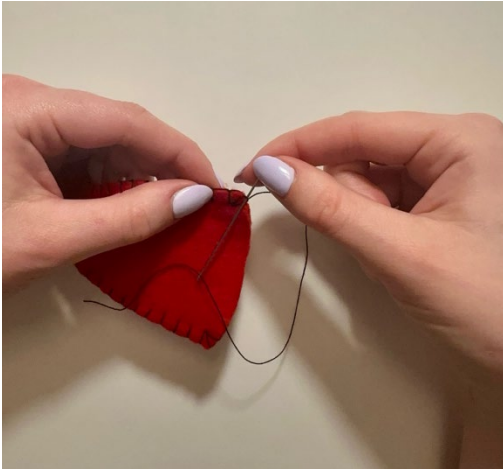
THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

	<p>Step Sixteen:</p> <p>Refer back to steps ten through twelve when you reach the dress sleeve and also when you reach bottom corner of the dress for a reminder on how to turn corners.</p>
	<p>Step Seventeen:</p> <p>Once you have completed one of the bottom corners of the dress, end your thread to leave the hemline (bottom) of the dress open. Refer back to steps thirteen through fifteen as a refresher on how to tie off your thread and begin stitching in a new spot.</p> <p>Begin your stitch on the other side of the dress, about 0.5 cm away where you made your very first stitch. Complete the stitch.</p>

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

	<p>Step Eighteen:</p> <p>Connect your last stitch (the stitch you just made) to the very first stitch you made when beginning this project. On the backside of the dress, loop the thread through the closed loop of the very first stitch and pull the thread through. Allow this connecting thread to sit along the seam of the dress.</p>
	<p>Step Nineteen:</p> <p>Now that these stitches are connected, go over the stitch you just made, by creating another stitch in the exact same place (to get you back on track). This stitch will connect to new stitches you will create going forward in order to complete your dress.</p>

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)



Step Twenty:

If needed, refer back to steps ten through twelve when you encounter the other bottom corner of the dress for a reminder on how to turn corners.

Completing Your Red Dress





Step Twenty-One:

Tie a loop around your last stitch (stitch three of your corner stitches). Close this loop in around the stitch.

Note: You may also refer to steps thirteen and fourteen as a refresher on how to tie off your thread once you have completed your dress using the blanket stitch.

THE NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PERSONS (MMIWG2S)

	<p>Step Twenty-Two:</p> <p>To your finish off your thread at the end stage, guide your needle and thread in between the fold of the two layers of felt (to hide it). Poke down through the bottom layer of felt with your needle. This will both protect the stitches from undoing and hide the thread within your work. Tie a double knot in the thread.</p> <p>Note: You may also refer back to steps thirteen and fourteen as a refresher on how to tie off your thread.</p>
	<p>Step Twenty-Three:</p> <p>Lastly, trim your excess thread (after the knot) so the thread lies tucked flat within the dress. You have now completed your embroidered red dress with the blanket stitch – great work!</p>

If you have any inquiries, suggested revisions, or photos you'd like to share of this activity, please feel free to email culture@metisnation.org.

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Helpful Tutorials

How to Thread a Needle:

Easy Sewing for Beginners. (2021). *How to Use a Needle Threader - Two Types!* Youtube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWbzL6-p4Tc>

Sarah Homfray Embroidery. (2015). *Surprisingly Easy Way to Thread a Needle...* Youtube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXmFMs-QqGE>

How to Knot Your Thread:

Daniela Mellen. (2023). *3 Ways to Tie a Knot with Thread for Hand Sewing.* Youtube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Em_5BvSaXz8

Note: if using these methods with pre-measured length of thread, use a single thread (not double).

Stitch Collective. (2020). *The Fastest and Easiest Way to Knot Your Thread!* Youtube. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/LWWWhRtxl6eE?si=rcAHKUqHZk6-WSa9>