Mentoring Program

As Mitten State Smockers were gaining new members we came to realize that we needed a way to make sure each person felt comfortable enough with their basic skills to fully participate in our chapter projects and workshops. At that time there were no classes available in our area to teach smocking. So it was decided to develop a mentoring program. The goal of our mentoring program was to make new members feel comfortable, give guidance and inspire confidence while they learned basic smocking stitches. A member of the chapter would volunteer to act as a mentor to a new member. The commitment to mentoring is for one year. As a mentor the “Big Sister” acts as the new persons go to person. They suggest things like books, patterns, where to get supplies as well as answer any questions the new member might have. They would sit with the new person at meetings to make sure they were able to follow along and feel welcome.

Cheryl Anderson volunteered to help develop this program. Cheryl started with developing a smocking kit to be used as a teaching/learning project to be done outside of regular meeting times. It is a one on one, mentor and new member experience. Using this kit allows the Mentor to teach/refresh not only smocking stitches but much more as you will soon see. It doesn’t take long for new friendships to develop.

Mentor’s teaching opportunities using this smocking kit

- How to center the pattern on the material (50 pleats for this smocking plate)
- Which row to start with (biggest repeat)
- Length of smocking thread
- How to strip floss
- Which needles to use
- How to tie on and off
- How to read a smocking plate
- Basic smocking stitches and combinations with different threads
- Blocking before surface smocking
- Make piping
- Attach piping to pleated/smocked sampler
- Attach material to sides of smocked sampler
- If desired, use sampler in something, like as an insert for a pocket on a tote
Mentor Smocking Kit

Designed by Cheryl R. Anderson (2008)

Your kit will include:

• Pre – pleated fabric for a mini sampler
  
  One piece of broad cloth 5 1/2” X 15”
  
  Pleat above cloth with 12 full spaces (first and last are holding rows). Pleat half spaces at rows 3 1/2, 4 1/2, and 7 1/2. Use thread color to match cloth for holding rows. Use a color different from the fabric for the full space rows and a different thread color for the half space rows. All together there should be 15 threads used to pleat the fabric. Over hand tie all threads at one end together.

• Threads (Pearl cotton, floss, floche)
  
  Use an index card to identify and wind the following threads on, using one of the suggested color groups. We used address labels for color #’s to attach to the cards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread Type</th>
<th>Yards</th>
<th>Pinks</th>
<th>Blues</th>
<th>Purples</th>
<th>Yellow/Coral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sewing thread to match fabric</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Cotton #8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>DMC 602</td>
<td>DMC 798</td>
<td>DMC 333</td>
<td>DMC 352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Cotton #8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>DMC 605</td>
<td>DMC 800</td>
<td>DMC 211</td>
<td>DMC 353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floss</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>DMC 605</td>
<td>DMC 800</td>
<td>DMC 211</td>
<td>DMC 353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floche</td>
<td>1 1/2</td>
<td>Light green</td>
<td>Ecru</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Light Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Graph (Smocking pattern)- **Pattern worked over 50 pleats**
  
  Included in the kit handouts

• Needle on a felt piece / Needle threader

• Stitches covered:
  
  Include instructional handouts or a copy of SAGA’s Stitch Anatomy
  a. Tying on / Ending off
  b. Full versus half-space rows
  c. Back-smocking
  d. Cable
  e. One-wrap French knot
  f. Wave stitch
  g. Stem/Outline (Wheat stitch)
  h. Wave trellis
  i. Crossover wave

• Fabric to coordinate sampler colors used. Suggested size is 10” X 22”
• To make piping include one 12” bias strip of fabric. A suggestion is to use a readymade quilt binding that is 7/8 “wide – double fold. Measure and cut a 12” length unfold and iron flat, cut in half length wise. Use one strip per kit. Cut one piece of cording 13” long per kit
• Pack fabrics and smocking materials in a lunch sized zip plastic bag. Print smocking plate and any other handout needed

Example of smocked sampler plate
Mentoring Sampler
Designed by Cheryl R. Anderson
2008

*This is smocked over 50 pleats.
*This graph shows the entire design.
*Orient pleated fabric so the half space pleating thread for row 2½ is on top
*Right handed smockers start on the left side and
*Left handed smockers start on the right side.

Holding row – Back Smock
(Regular sewing thread or 1 strand of floss in the same color as the fabric)

Row 1 – Cable Stitch
(Pearl Cotton #8–Darkest color)

Row 2-2½ Half-Space Chevron/ Baby Wave
(Floche)

Row 2 ½ -3 Half-Space Chevron/ Baby Wave
(Floche)

Row 2 ½ French Knot
(Pearl Cotton #8 Darkest color)

Row3 ½ -4 Half-Space Chevron/ Baby Wave
(Pearl #8-Lightest color)

Row 4-5 3-Step Trellis
(Pearl #8 – Lightest color)

Row5-6 3-Step Trellis
(Pearl #8 – Lightest color)

Row 6-6 ½ Half-Space Chevron, also known as Baby Wave
(Pearl #8-Lightest color)

Row 7-8 Cross-Over Wave
(3 strands of Floss)

Row 7-8 Starting on 2nd pleat Cross-Over Wave
(Pearl Cotton #8-Darkest color)

Row 8-9 Cross-Over Wave
(Pearl Cotton #8-Darkest color)

Row 8-9 starting with 2nd pleat Cross-Over Wave
(3 strands of Floss)

Row 10 Wheat Stitch which is one row of Stem Stitch & one row of Outline Stitch
(Pearl Cotton #8- Lightest color)

Holding Row – Back Smock
(Regular sewing thread or 1 strand of floss in the same color as the fabric)