

❧ *Sampler Row Quilt Sew Along* ❧

(*By Kathleen Tracy*)



Finished Quilt: approximately 44" x 50"

Finished Block Size: 4" x 4"

Number of Blocks: 36



Welcome to another group quilting adventure - the Sampler Row Quilt Sew Along. I'm excited that so many of you have decided to join us in making another quilt using the Schoolgirl Sampler blocks. This will be a **10-week** project using blocks from my book **Schoolgirl Sampler**. My sampler row quilt contains 36 simple four-inch blocks set in six rows of six blocks. I made six matching blocks for each row and used different fabrics in each

block for a scrappy look. You'll set the blocks on point in rows and use sashing in between the rows. Remember that it's your quilt so you can make it any way you like. You do not have to choose the same blocks I chose for mine. However, if you do decide to make the quilt as shown, these are the numbers of the blocks I used from the book: **Blocks 4, 14, 21, 36, 47 and 70.**

All of the block directions are in my Schoolgirl Sampler book. You can use any blocks in any combination. If you'd like a larger quilt, make more blocks and more rows. Smaller quilts can be made with fewer blocks and fewer rows. Make a Christmas-themed quilt in red and green or a fall quilt in warm colors, a two-color quilt in blue and white or red and white. Make your quilt with '30s fabrics or Batiks or use darker setting triangles if you prefer. Make the quilt with or without the borders. So many possibilities. Pick your favorite blocks and be creative!

Here's how the Sew Along will work –

1. Look through the book and choose your six favorite blocks. Each week for 6 weeks you'll make six of the same blocks for a row. Follow the directions in the book for making your blocks.
2. After six weeks, I'll give you instructions to make the settings for the blocks and put each row together. After that, you'll put the rows together with sashing and add the borders.

Sew Along Schedule

We'll make the blocks and put the quilt together on a **10-week schedule:**

Week 1 - beginning on **September 16:** Make six blocks

Week 2 - beginning on **September 23:** Make six blocks

Week 3 - beginning on **September 30:** Make six blocks

Week 4 - beginning on **October 7:** Make six blocks

Week 5 - beginning on **October 14:** Make six blocks

Week 6 - beginning on **October 21:** Make six blocks

Weeks 7, 8 - beginning on **October 28:** Set the blocks with setting and corner triangles to make the rows. I'll give you directions for doing this and making the sashing and borders.

Week 9 - beginning on **November 11:** Sew the sashing between the rows.

Week 10 - beginning on **November 18:** Add the borders.

Making blocks together on a weekly basis worked well when we did the original Schoolgirl Sampler Sew Along in 2021 so I thought we'd try it again for this quilt for a few months. Once again, I'll encourage you to try to keep on the weekly schedule to make your blocks. But I understand that things often get in the way and you

can always work at your own pace. No pressure, just lots of fun. Jump in any time, start making your blocks and work at your own pace. Since it's half the size of the sampler quilt, it shouldn't take quite as long.

Some of you who are new to the group and/or just new to making small quilt blocks might find some help in the group file called "Sewing Small Blocks for Small Quilts." There are tips in the Schoolgirl Sampler group files for making certain blocks. Tips are also included on pages 8-9 of the book. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

If you're reading this, then you're already in the Schoolgirl Sampler group. You should have the book and block directions so there's nothing else to buy. (Except fabric - I always encourage you to buy some new fabric for inspiration. Even just a little will motivate you when you begin a new project. If you do not have a shop near you that carries reproduction fabrics, there's a list of shops that do in the group files.)

In addition to the Schoolgirl Sampler book for the block directions, here's what you'll need:

Basic Quilting Supplies

Cutting mat

Rotary cutter

Rulers (Recommended: a 6" x 12" ruler for cutting, a 6" x 24" for cutting border strips, and a 4 ½" square ruler for squaring up your blocks. If you can only buy one, then get a 6" x 12" non-slip ruler.)

Pins – try Clover fine glass head pins

Needles (Recommended: Size 75/11 Universal or 70/10 Microtex Sharp for your machine)

Thread (Recommended: 100 % cotton thread for machine. I prefer Aurifil 50 wt.)

Seam ripper

Iron and pressing mat or surface

Sewing machine if you're piecing your blocks by machine

Fabric requirements

I used fabric scraps for the blocks. If you do not have scraps or a fabric stash, this is a great excuse to go shopping and pick up some new fabric. Buy lots of smaller cuts of fabric in a range of colors. If you do not have a quilt shop near you that carries reproduction fabrics, see the List of Shops in the group files. Search the internet for reproduction fabrics and check for other quilt shops online or on Etsy. Many shops will be happy to supply you with an assortment of fabrics in bundles or smaller pieces for a nice variety.

- For the setting triangles for the blocks, you will need about **1/4 yard** of fabric for each row. I used a different print for each row that coordinated with my scrappy blocks, i.e., something light and not too busy so that the blocks would stand out.
- For the dark sashing between the rows, you will need 5 strips of fabric that measure 1 3/4 " x 33" each. Use the same or different fabrics. (I used 3 different dark prints for my quilt for a scrappy look, alternating between the rows.) If using the same print, **buy 1/3 yard**.

- For the inner border, you will need **1/4 yard** of the same fabric.
- For the outer border, you will need **1 1/2 yards** of fabric.

Here's my tip for choosing fabrics: Wait. Make your blocks first, then match each row with a setting fabric that coordinates with your blocks. Keep in mind that in the coming weeks you'll see pictures of the fabrics that other quilters are using to make their quilts. Group sew alongs are always great opportunities for learning. You'll see how others pick fabrics that work well with their blocks, and you may fall in love with something that's completely different from what you originally planned. Keep an open mind, take your time, and eventually choose what you love.

Sampler quilt organization tip: One thing I like to do when I begin working on a project that I know is going to take time is to buy a project case (or find a nice box) to store my pieces, blocks, fabric, the book and any other notes or instructions in it. Michaels stores in the U.S. sell clear or opaque scrapbooking project boxes. I have a few of them stacked in my closet containing blocks for several larger quilts I'm working on. Keeps everything in one place and you can see at a glance which project is inside.

Once again, I know that some of you may be eager to get started. As we did in the Schoolgirl Sampler sew along, I'd like to ask you to please refrain from posting far ahead of the schedule. In other words, don't post pictures of your finished quilts early on while other are still beginning to work on theirs. We're taking this one step at a time to make it easier for everyone and give them the opportunity to keep up. Some quilters get discouraged easily if they feel like they're behind and I'd like to keep the group pressure free. Once we get the ball rolling and everyone is making some progress, then you can certainly show your quilts. Also, remember to always be kind and encouraging when commenting on others' blocks or quilts. We follow the "Bambi Rule" around here and in my other group – "If you can't say anything nice, then don't say anything at all."

That's really about all you need to know about the Sampler Row Quilt Sew Along. Try to keep up but don't fuss too much. Work at your own pace. Ask questions if you need help. Many in the group will be happy to advise you or show you how to do something. The wonderful thing about scrappy quilts with many different fabrics is that they're very forgiving. Slow down and try to do your best when making the blocks. But even if you make a mistake or two, keep going. The mistakes will not really be evident once everything is put together.

Remember, the Sew Along begins on Friday, September 16.

 *Kathy*