

Preliminary notes about fabric selection: To make our Color Wheel stars sparkle, all backgrounds for the 12 blocks are black. Each month's block emphasizes a different color, with a black background. Some blocks also use other colors, in addition to the main color. When choosing your fabrics (including the black for the backgrounds), you may use solids, or prints that read as solids (for example Moda Marbles, or color-on-color prints like a red-on-red or green-on-green). Don't worry about trying to get the exact same shade or tone that others are using - the variety will add interest to the finished quilt. (For example, the June block uses Red-Orange fabric. We will have different ideas about what constitutes the color Red-Orange.)

April 2016 - Red-Violet - LeMoynes Star
Finished Size: 9"
Skill Building - Set-In Seams (or Y-Seams)

Fabric Requirements: 1/4 yd. (or FQ) Black; leftover Red-Violet and Violet from February (keep leftover fabric for final quilt assembly)

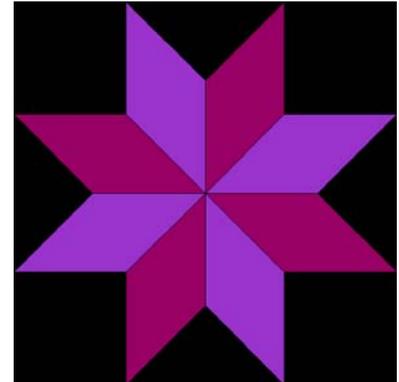
Cutting Instructions:

Black - Four 3-1/2" squares
One 5-3/4" square, cut twice on the diagonal
(in an "X" forming four triangles)
(All of these pieces are intentionally cut over-sized)

Red-Violet - Four of Template A

Violet - Four of Template A

Cutting Tip: To cut the Template A diamonds, first cut a 2-3/8" strip of each of the Violet fabrics. Lay the strips on top of one another, right sides up, and then use the template to cut the four diamonds.



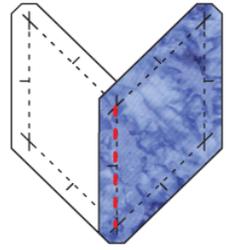
Piecing Instructions:

Set-in Seams (also called Y-Seams and inset seams) are intimidating to many quilters, but they needn't be. Once you get the hang of them, they're a breeze! This block gives you 24 opportunities to practice, so you're sure to be a pro by the time you finish it. When you sew most seams, you sew all the way from edge to edge. With set-in or Y-seams, you start and stop sewing at the 1/4" mark, never sewing into the seam allowance. If your block doesn't lie flat, it's usually because you've sewn one or two stitches into the seam allowance. You will have to pick out those stitches in order for the seam to lie flat. The trick to perfect set-in seams is in marking the seam lines, and then matching the points where they intersect. First, draw lines to mark the 1/4" seam lines on the backs of each of the 16 pieces you cut.



Next, lay out the block pieces as shown in the block photo. Begin by sewing the star pieces together, working around the star in a clockwise direction. Place a Violet star segment and a Red-Violet star segment right sides together. Put a "positioning pin" through the points where the seam lines intersect, matching them up precisely. You also may want to add a pin (or more, for longer seams) in the center of the seam line. Keeping the positioning pins vertical, use a couple of additional pins to secure the two pieces of fabric together, and then remove the positioning pins.

Next, sew the seam, starting and stopping at the points where the seam allowances intersect; in other words, at the 1/4" point on each end. I like to take a backstitch or two to secure the piece, but I recommend not backstitching until you get used to starting and stopping right at that 1/4" point. Instead, leave a 2" thread tail (top and bobbin thread) on each end. That way, if you end up having to pick out a stitch or two that went over into the seam allowance, your thread tails will still be long enough that the stitches won't pop out, leaving part of the seam open.



Continue adding pieces around the star, alternating colors, until half of the star is complete (i.e., four star points). Press all of the star seams in the same direction. Repeat to join the other half of the star points.



I like to add the center triangle and two outer corners to each half before I join the two halves, and then add the side triangles last. However, if desired, you could join the two star halves, and then add all of the outer set-in pieces. The triangles and corner squares are added using the same piecing method as the star points, matching the intersection points with positioning pins, pinning, and sewing from point to point. To sew the side triangles, first match and pin one side. Sew from the outside edge to the center stopping point, and take a single backstitch. Then, without cutting the thread, lift your presser foot and pull the star out a couple of inches. Turn the piece and match the other side of the triangle with the other star point. Then put it back under the needle, and hand-turn until the needle goes right back in the hole where the thread is coming out. Take a single backstitch, and continue sewing to the other outside edge. This will give you a nice, flat turn with a sharp inner point. Here's a website with a good tutorial using this method: <http://www.the-littlest-thistle.com/2014/10/finish-along-quarter-3-tutorial-week.html>

Note: The side triangles and corner square are intentionally cut larger than they need to be. Don't worry that the sides of these pieces extend past the edges of your block. The only points you need to worry about are the interior seam intersections. Having these outside pieces cut over-sized makes it really easy to square up your block, leaving a full 1/4" seam allowance so your star points don't get cut off.

Now that you've made the star using set-in seams, I must confess that there are dozens of tutorials on the web that show easier ways of making LeMoyne Stars without any set-in seams. Nevertheless, knowing how to sew a set-in seam is a useful skill to learn. For example, using set-in seams, you can insert a fussy-cut square of fabric into a contrasting frame with no seam lines. I encourage you to take the plunge and give it a try! Be patient with yourself as you learn this new skill.

