

Sew What Designs – Making Bookmarks

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Introduction

Bookmarks are great gifts for all sorts of situations. Many are in two colors so you could embroider them in specific team colors for that “hard to find” gift. To make them reversible you will need to have a bobbin of the same thread and color as the top thread. This works really well with the Cross Stitch designs. The drawback is that you will have two lots of thread jumps to cut. I always try to minimize thread jumps in a design anyway. With Cross Stitch designs the major factor is often the color order. If the design is planned correctly the thread jumps can be reduced. In designs with a lot of detail, thread jumps will be unavoidable and are best trimmed at the start of the next color.

I digitize the Cross Stitch designs with four stitches in each thread. This gives a good coverage even over a darker thread underneath. So detailed sections are completed first with what looks like a lot of thread jumps but these are covered over in the next color when the gaps are filled in.

Any size or shape of design can be used for a bookmark. Traditionally they are rectangular so that they hold their position in the book. I have a free design included so you can try one out.

Stabilizers and Hooping

Like all designs they will need to be stabilized well. In our classes we recommend that you place a layer of stabilizer underneath your fabric and hoop both together. I used a tearaway Vilene for my stabilizer as the Cross Stitch designs will cover it completely and it will be easy to remove from the sides of the finished design.

If the design you have chosen is not going to cover the fabric you could choose to use water-soluble stabilizer. I hate picking out all the little bits of tearaway from the back of a design and ever since the water soluble Vilene 541 became available I have used it extensively. I find that the projects need good soaking or several rinses of warm water to remove all traces of it. You can leave some in to add stiffness to the bookmark.

It is really important that your fabric be on the straight grain in the hoop especially if you are using Aida cloth. I encourage my students to mark a long horizontal and vertical line onto the fabric and to use the templates provided with the hoops. This way they can check that they have not stretched the fabric off grain during the hooping. ([See Aida Cloth](#))

Adhesive stabilizer can be used in the hoop if you are embroidering onto smaller pieces of fabric such as strips of Aida cloth. If you plan to patch this and reuse it (which I do all the time) I suggest that you place an additional piece of tearaway stabilizer underneath when you are embroidering on the patched adhesive. It is not quite as tight once you patch it so it often needs the additional piece of stabilizer.

Embroidering the design

Designer 1 or Pfaff 2140 owners will be able to use the Outline fix functions to check the placement of the design with an outline of tacking stitches. This is extremely useful with Aida cloth especially if you are using an edged strip. A small error in the alignment will become really obvious where you have two edges close together.

Where the design does not come right up to the outline the fix stitching can be left in place and used to provide a guideline for decorative stitching to be added after the design is embroidered. It provides a perfectly rectangular guideline around a design that can be easily covered up by decorative stitching.

I like to use a fabric that will complement the colors in the design. If you are going to leave the bookmark completely plain then the outer cross stitches will allow a small amount of base fabric to show. If this is a problem a fine pointed permanent marker the correct color can be used to touch up the base fabric if

there is too much contrast between the outer stitches and the fabric. I have a set of pens that have rescued a number of designs that would otherwise have ended up in the bin.

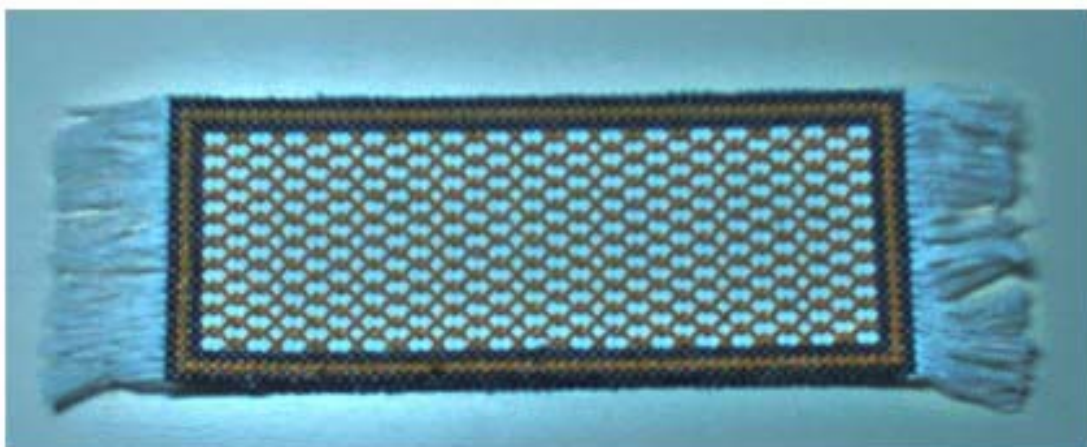
The simplest way to finish the bookmark is simply to trim the fabric carefully away from the sides. As each cross is worked four times they will hold really well as long as they are not cut. Scraps of water-soluble stabilizer dissolved in water make a great glue to hold any stitching. I have had mixed success with paint on products that can be added to stop stitching from fraying as many leave a distinct mark on light fabrics.



Fringing

Self Fringe

Adding a self- fringe is also easy. Trim the long sides but leave an inch or so of fabric at either end. This should easily fringe by removing the shorter fibers. Coarser linen fabrics will produce a better-looking fringe than a fine weave fabric, but all can be fringed. It is important that the embroidery be on the true grain of the fabric otherwise the fringing will not be even. The technique described below in the Aida cloth section will ensure that the fabric is placed in the hoop correctly. ([See Aida Cloth](#))



Purchased Fringe

A purchased fringe can be added by leaving a hem on the short end and gluing or sewing a purchased fringe onto it.

Beaded Fringe

If the bookmark design is to be embellished with beads a beaded fringe can be added. The bead - work can be just simple strands or quite ornate linked strands.

Lace

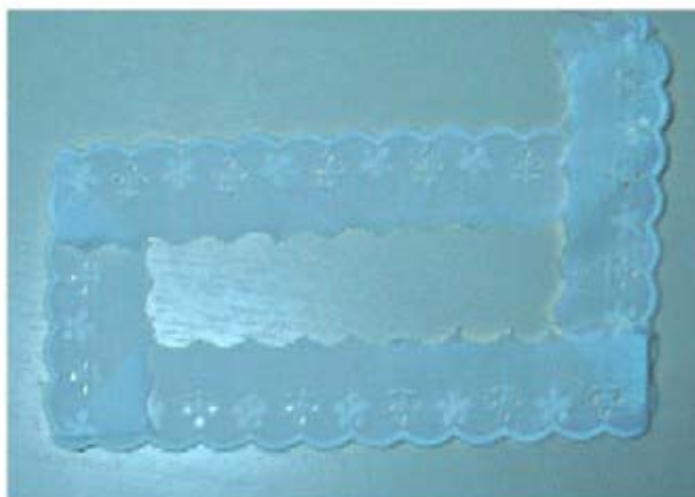
Lace can be added to the bookmark in a variety of ways. Just at each end like the fringe or all around for an heirloom look.

When adding a lace border I like to miter the corners in the same way as I edge my quilts with a French fold.



At the corner fold the lace 45°. Bring the lace straight down in line with the next edge. This leaves the top fold even with the lace edge of the previous side.

Repeat this fold at each corner.



The corners can now be stitched with a small zigzag and trimmed. Attach the lace to the bookmark with glue to hold into position and then stitch with a small satin stitch to finish

If you have designs for machine-embroidered lace they can be used to provide the lace edging. Scraps can be joined together by a small zigzag in the same color to complete the edge. I attach the lace using the Edge joining foot and a small zigzag. Place the bookmark on one side and the lace on the other. Once it is in position I go back over the join with a satin stitch.



If you are planning to line the bookmark and also add lace it can be easy to catch the lace when sewing up the side seams, especially with gathered lace. An easy solution to this is to place a basting stitch through the top of the lace and to pull it in so that it is well away from the seam. When the seams are completed the basting can be removed and it will ensure that the lace is not caught up in the seam. I always use this technique for cushions and I find it saves me lots of time unpicking small sections where the frill has overlapped in the seam.

Ribbon

Attaching a ribbon does make it easier to locate the bookmark, but this also converts them to what my cats consider to be an irresistible target.

The bookmark can be glued and stitched onto a section of ribbon or ribbons inserted into the ends of a backed bookmark.

AIDA Cloth

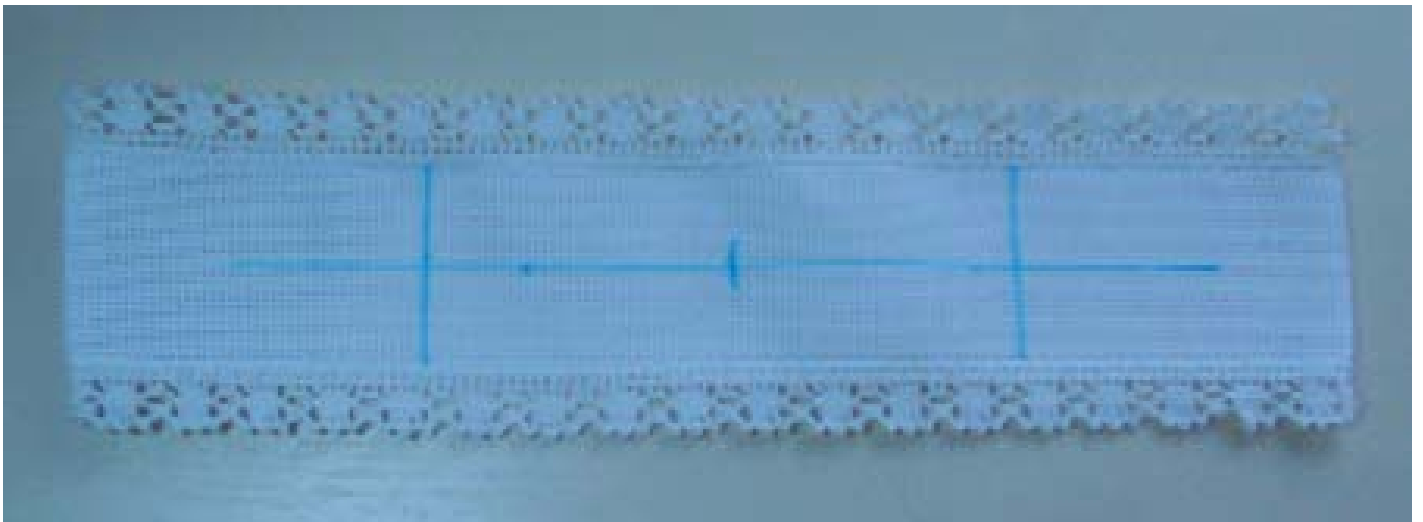
Stitching these bookmarks onto edged Aida cloth is the simplest way to create a quality bookmark in the least amount of time. Using the same embroidery thread in the bobbin the bookmarks are reversible. The edges of the cloth can be finished with a machine stitch in a toning or contrasting color.

When embroidering straight onto the cloth strip it is critical that the design be placed correctly as any deviation will be glaringly obvious. When working with Aida cloth I always use an adhesive stabilizer in the hoop and carefully mark out the dimensions of the full design on the Aida cloth in vanishing pen

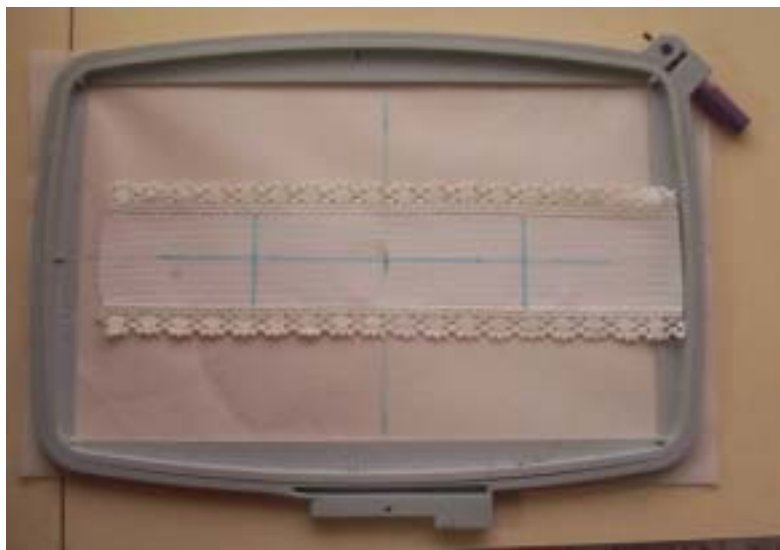
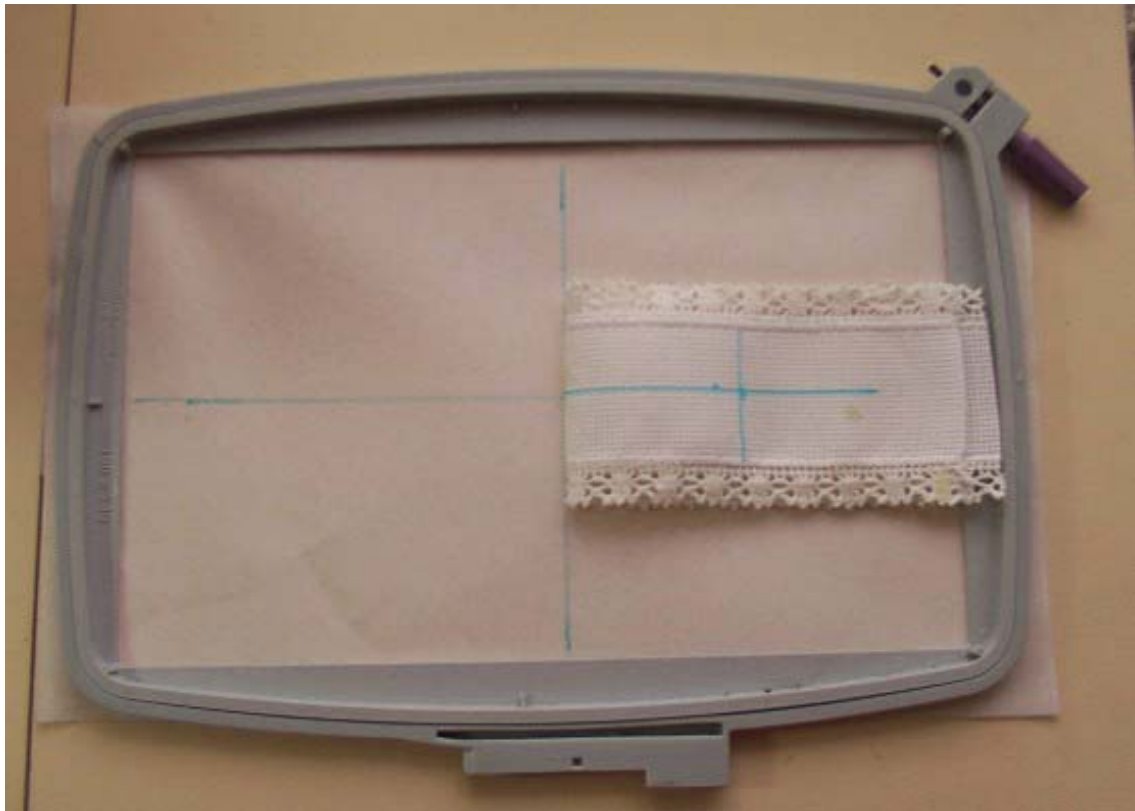
To embroider I first:



1. Place adhesive onto the hoop.
2. Mark the hoop using the template. NOT THE LUGS TO HOLD THE TEMPLATE. As you can see with this hoop they are not in the center.



3. Mark all placement lines onto both sides of the Aida Cloth
4. Position the center of the design mark in the center of the hoop with the fabric right side up and roll the fabric forward matching the markings to keep the fabric straight.



Using this technique the Aida cloth should be in exactly the correct position for the design to be lined up.

Use your trace function to check the placement and reposition the fabric if necessary before embroidering.

When adding outlines onto designs embroidered onto Aida cloth the built in Cross Stitch stitches in your machine can be utilized. These are often neglected stitches but make great edges and borders. Refer to your instruction book for suggested lengths and widths to use.

Embellishing the cat design

The cat design included in the bookmark collection is fine as it is but if you want to add interest then eyes can be added by attaching a pink sequin with a black bead to each eye. A bow, beaded or diamante collar can be added as well. These touches really make a difference to the design. These cat bookmarks are great fundraisers for a fete or stall.

Beading any design can transform the embroidery from something simple to really distinctive.

I hope this mini tutorial has been of some help to you. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at: carolynduncan@sewwhatdesigns.com The free design included and the designs in my Bookmark collection may be stitched out and sold freely. However trading or selling the designs themselves is an infringement of copyright.