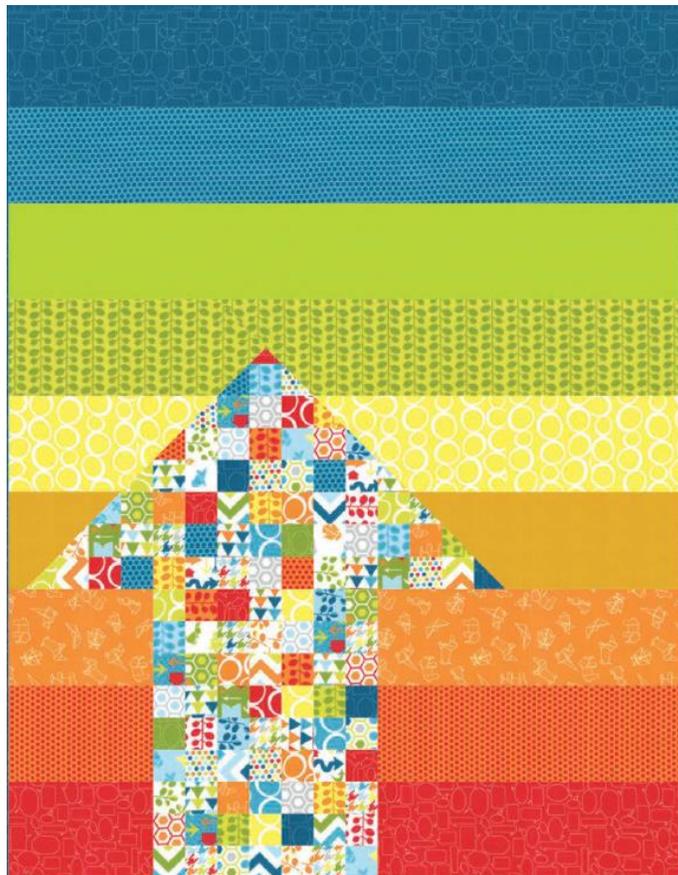


*Bright Star Quilts  
and the  
Charlottesville Area  
Quilters Guild*



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for larger distribution.  
(updated May 2021, August 2022)

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# Bright Star Quilts and CAQG

## INTRODUCTION

For over twelve years, CAQG has been providing Bright Star Quilts and accompanying age-appropriate books to some of the local public elementary schools in Albemarle County and Charlottesville. The quilts have been received by the school staff with great appreciation. The children are given their quilt and book at the beginning of the school year. They nap with it each day, and they take their quilt home to keep at the end of the school year.

Led by the Robin Hamill-Ruth and Kirsten Nieman (Tuesday Morning Chapter), our Bright Stars community outreach program includes contributions from CAQG members in all chapters. Kirsten and Robin lead a group of volunteers who liaise with a number of schools with Bright Star classrooms. Our approach is to only work with a school if we can support all Bright Star classrooms in that school. In 2019, we supported six schools with over 160 quilts. In 2020 and 2021, we donated 234 quilts.

### ***Why Bright Stars?***

The Bright Stars Program is a high-quality preschool program for four year-olds in Albemarle County. The program includes age appropriate literacy and experiential learning. Bright Stars aims to provide early learning experiences and comprehensive social supports for students and families.

The program serves 4-year-olds who may be at risk for developmental and/or educational challenges. A variety of child and family risk factors are considered including low or limited income, homelessness, an identified disability, or limited parent/guardian education. Other risk factors may be considered such as single parent households, mental or physical health concerns, domestic violence, substance use and abuse or neglect.

A popular feature of Show and Tell, many of these quilts are also brought to Spring Fest (the first Saturday in April) for collection. It is a perfect time to show off all these adorable quilts. However, Kirsten and Robin will take them at any time in preparation for the presentation of the quilts to the schools in August.

Ask someone who attends Tuesday Morning to deliver your quilt or reach out to Robin or Kirsten personally.

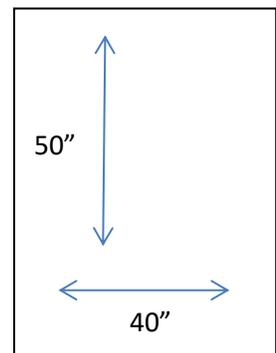
This is such an easy way to give back to the community with a project that is so appreciated. Thank you quilters!

Any questions please call Kirsten Niemann, (804) 920-0053, or Robin Hamill-Ruth (434) 989-9365.

## GUIDELINES

As with most quilting projects, there is a place for creativity to shine in the creation of Bright Star quilts. However, there are a number of guidelines for these donations. Mostly, guidelines are meant to ensure that quilts meet the needs of the students, but also to provide a sense of equality among the offerings. These quilts are very utilitarian, so durability is key. Here are a few asks, as well as suggestions:

**SIZE:** Quilts should be 40" wide by 50" long. An inch or two in either direction is okay, but try to aim for the requested size. Larger quilts may be viewed as more desirable, so anything we can do to prevent squabbles is helpful to the teachers.



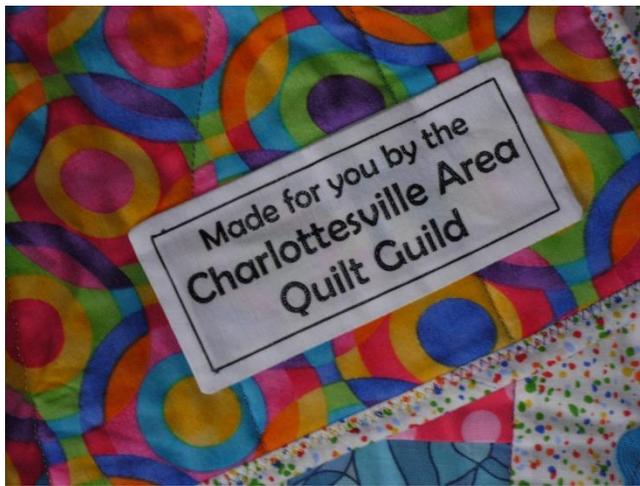
The quilts are used at naptime, so the size works well for that purpose. The width also allows for a single piece of fabric to be used for the back, although you are welcome to piece it to use up scraps.

**MATERIALS:** Quilts are washed often, so good quality 100% cotton is recommended for the quilts. Flannel is not suggested (although soft, it may be too warm for some of the classrooms). Trims, if any, should be washable and securely anchored.

Batting type is a personal choice. Many quilters only use 100% cotton (remember that it shrinks upon washing), but 80/20 works well, too. High loft polyester washes well and does not shrink. Please be sure to check the recommended spacing for quilting for whichever batting you choose. Repeated washings (which

these quilts will likely have) can ruin a quilt that has stitching spaced too far apart. Several chapters use funds provided by the guild to purchase batting for use with Bright Star quilts. Check with your Chapter Rep to see if that is the case for your chapter.

**LABELS:** CAQG provides preferred labels for the quilts free of charge. Check with your Chapter Rep for as many as you need. They are also available for pick up at both Spring and Fall Fests.



The labels can be placed anywhere on the back of the quilt, even sewn on as part of the quilting (most durable) with a zigzag stitch. An easy way to turn under edges is to place a white piece of fabric on the front and sew all the way around a quarter inch from the black line. Snip a hole in the center of the white fabric and turn it to the back of the label.

The labels are silk screened, however, so be aware that the ink will smear if touched by a hot iron. Use a pressing cloth or applique sheet when ironing them.

**THEMES:** Themes can be dictated by the fabric chosen for the top, either in content or color. Use your imagination when picking something that might appeal to a four year old. One guideline provided in this area is to steer clear of hugely popular Disney-type characters or movie themes. Avoid any *Frozen* fabrics, for instance. That said, *Mickey Mouse*, *Cat in the Hat*, and other classic themes are welcome.

The other guideline here is to avoid religious themes. These quilts will be used in public schools, and we help teachers by avoiding, for example, Noah's Ark themed quilts.

Remember that quilts will be given to both boys and girls, so feel free to use pink and purple, but dinosaurs and cars are also popular. Other common themes include animals, pirates, fairies, unicorns, and rainbows.

**WASHING:** Please wash all Bright Star quilts before donating them. This is particularly important if pets are in the house, as some students may have allergies. Another reason to wash the quilt is to verify that the colors won't run and ruin the quilt for the child after its first washing at home. If you use red or other vibrant fabric (and especially if you are of the camp that doesn't wash fabrics before using them) it's doubly important! Wash the quilt in **WARM** water (we can't leave instructions to only wash in cold water) and use color catchers to collect errant dyes. You may even need to wash it a few times to ensure that the quilt won't bleed when washed by the child's family.

Some quilters have reported that Dream Cotton Request batting shrinks unevenly and far more than the 5% advertised and should probably be avoided for these projects. It's disheartening to work hard to meet the 40" x 50" guidelines only to have the quilt be wavy and too small after washing!

**OTHER:** We have had some adorable quilts that make use of appliqué, so if that is one of your favorite techniques, please feel free to include it. We do caution the use of **simple** raw-edge applique on these quilts, however, given the amount of washing that they usually go through. That said, there are lovely examples of well sewn-down appliqués that can withstand frequent washing.

Quilting patterns are variable on these quilts, as well. Many quilters take the opportunity to practice free-motion or other styles of quilting (e.g. stitch in the ditch or cross-hatching). While we want good quality quilts going to the program, this is an excellent time to practice without fear that imperfections will diminish the value of the quilt. Four year olds will not mind, for instance, if meandering lines cross each other.

There are a limited number of long-arm quilters who will quilt Bright Star quilts free of charge. Check with your Chapter Rep/President for contact information. In those cases, be sure to provide batting and backing that is at least 4 inches wider and longer on each side than the top.

A double-fold binding is recommended given the heavy use these quilts get. For the same reason, many quilters prefer to machine bind the quilts. In essence, rather than sewing the binding to the front, folding it over, and hand-sewing it to the back, quilters attach the binding to the back, fold it over and machine stitch it on the front, often with a decorative or zig-zag stitch.

## BOOKS

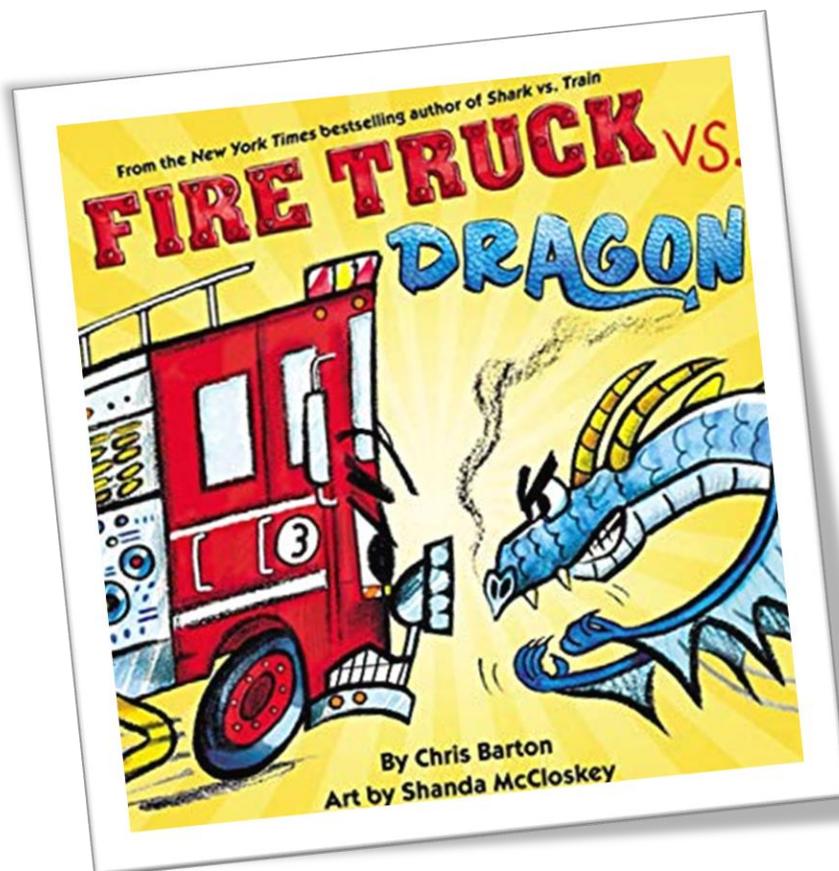
If possible, when submitting a quilt for the Bright Stars program, include an age appropriate book with it. However, organizers do have a “stash” of books that can be used, so donations of quilts are certainly welcome without a book.

Some chapters have chosen to use the funds provided by the guild to purchase books for this purpose. Check with your Chapter Rep to see if your chapter will provide either reimbursement or has a collection of books to be used for this purpose.

Books should be new, or like new. Thrift stores or the JMRL book sale are great sources for inexpensive books, but your choice should not include any writing inside, torn pages, or other evidence that the book is not new. The Green Valley Book Fair (<https://gobookfair.com/>) in Mt. Crawford is another great source for new books at a reduced price.

Most quilters try to connect the theme of the book with the theme of the quilt, although this is not required. For instance, a book about an animal may have that animal featured in the quilt. Some folks choose to pick a book first and create a quilt that relates. Others create the quilt first and then find a “matching” book.

When selecting books to include with a quilt, follow similar guidelines as those of the quilts themselves by avoiding religious topics or currently popular Disney/movie topics. (We don't want the kids to fight or exhibit jealousy over our gifts.)



## **BRIGHT STAR QUILTS IN A NUTSHELL...**

- Bright Star quilts should measure 40" x 50"
- Themes include any color or content that appeals to 4-year olds with the exception of currently popular Disney-type or religious topics (e.g. *Frozen* or Noah's Ark)
- Include a guild provided label on the back (machine attached is okay)
- Wash prior to donating
- Donations typically include a new or like-new age-appropriate book
- Any questions please call Robin Hamill-Ruth (434) 989-9365 or Kirsten Niemann (804) 920-0053.

## Sample Designs

Bright Star quilts come in a huge variety of designs. Some, however, are particularly popular to create. What follows are some suggestions for how to create three different styles of quilts: panels, strips, blocks.

Some quilters find the materials and then look for a pattern to use. Others have a favorite pattern and create it in multiple ways via scraps or other available fabrics. Others still may begin with an orphan block and build around it. The following are simply a few of the options available.

### **PANELS**

Perhaps the easiest quilt to create is to take a panel or even attractive length of fabric and border it to the correct size (40" x 50"). This section shows some options for borders, and how to best calculate those borders.

### **STRIPS**

Another easy approach is to design either a row by row style (horizontal) or coin style (vertical) of strips of fabric. This section shows a few popular patterns in both styles

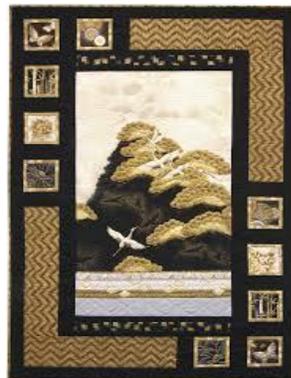
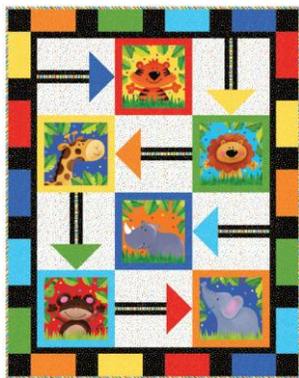
### **BLOCKS**

The most versatile style allows a combination of blocks. This section provides tips on calculating block sizes, alternate block choices, and other ideas for arrangement.

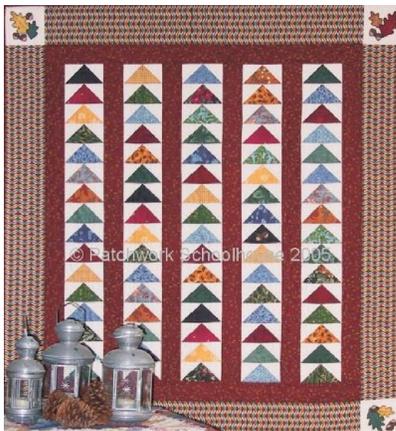


Regardless of the style chosen, the quilt design need not be complicated. The following pages show images for inspiration (of design, not necessarily using age appropriate fabrics) as well as a number of patterns with directions including fabric requirements, cutting and sewing directions. Enjoy your creativity!

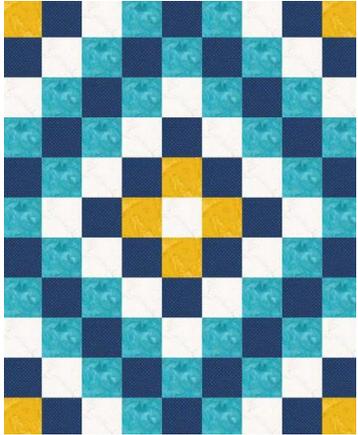
# PANELS



# STRIPS



BLOCKS



## PATTERNS

Many commercially produced patterns can be adapted to fit the guidelines for Bright Star quilts, however, a lot of folks simply create their own from materials chosen for the quilt. Consider the following:

- a 40" x 50" quilt can have the following (with no border):
  - 20 (4 x 5) 10" blocks
  - 80 (8 x 10) 5" blocks
  - 20 (4 x 5) 9" blocks with 1½" sashing (quilt size 40½" x 51")
  - 20 (4 x 5) 8" blocks with 2½" sashing (quilt size 39½" x 50")
- Measure a panel, subtract each dimension from 40" x 50", and divide the remainder by two (if you plan to do symmetrical borders). If the border dimension seems too large, consider making two. In some cases, you may have two borders on opposing sides, but only one on the other two (e.g. a 32" x 24" panel could have a 5" and 4" border top and bottom [ $50 - 32 = 18 / 2 = 9 = 5 + 4$ ] and 8" borders on the sides [ $40 - 24 = 16 / 2 = 8$ ])
- Borders may be the same in size, but not necessarily the same type (i.e. one border may be pieced and the other a solid piece of fabric).
- Jelly rolls finish at 2", so can easily be used to create or complete tops to the requested 40" x 50".
- Smaller panels (or fabric book pages) can often be bordered to make larger blocks.

The pattern instructions for pieced tops on the following pages were drafted specifically for the use of CAQG members to use for creating Bright Star charity quilts, although personal use is also permitted. Feel free to adapt them to your projects as you see fit. If you have a favorite pattern that you would like to see added to this document, please send the information to Robin or Kirstenkare.

## Pinwheel Strip



**Quilt Size:** 40" x 52"

**Finished Block Size:** 4" x 16"

### Fabric requirements:

Background (cream): 1½ yd

Pinwheel dark (black): ¼ yd

Pinwheel light (white): ¼ yd

Pinwheel frames (assorted brights): 10 different 1/8 yd pieces

### Cutting Instructions:

- 1) From each of 10 assorted brights cut two 6½" x 4½" rectangles
- 2) From pinwheel dark and pinwheel light cut three WOF 3" strips, cross cut them into forty 3" squares
- 3) From background cut ten WOF 4½" strips

sub cut two sets of each of the following:

36½"

32½" and 4½"

28½" and 8½"

24½" and 12½"

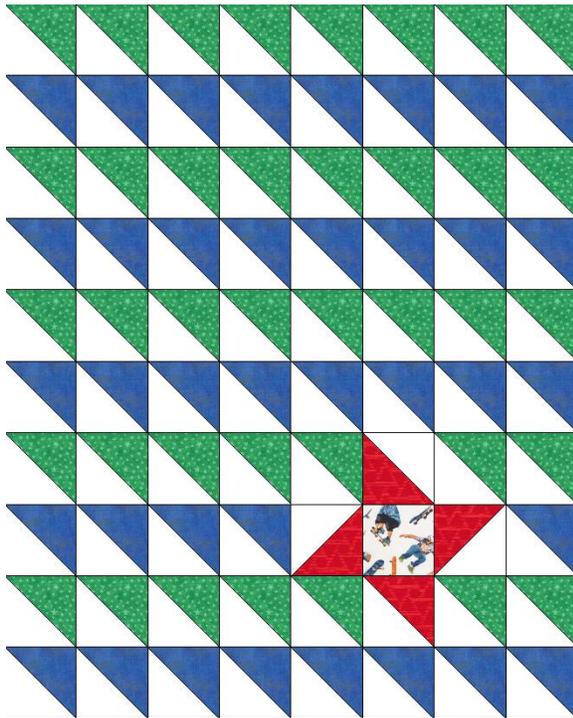
20½" and 16½"

### Sewing Instructions:

- 1) Create pinwheel blocks by placing light and dark pinwheel 3" squares together right sides together (RST), draw a diagonal line on the back, and sew ¼" on either side of the diagonal line. Cut on the diagonal line to make half square triangles (HST). Trim the HSTs to 2 ½". Sew four HSTs in a four patch to make 10 pinwheels.
- 2) Sew matching bright 6½" x 4½" rectangles to opposite sides of a pinwheel.
- 3) Sew background subsets to the ends of each colored pinwheel block.
- 4) Sew the 10 50" strips together lengthwise.



## Novelty Friendship



**Quilt Size:** 40" x 50"

**Finished Block Size:** 5"

### Fabric requirements:

*Dark 1* (green): ½ yd

*Dark 2* (blue): ½ yd

Contrast (white): 1 yd

Highlight (red): ¼ yd

Novelty: 1/8 yd or 5 ½" scrap

### Cutting Instructions:

1) From each Dark fabric cut six 6" strips, cross cut into 38 *Dark 1* 6" blocks 37 *Dark 2* 6" blocks

2) From the Contrast fabric cut fourteen 6" strips, cross cut into 6" blocks for a total of 79

3) From Highlight cut one 6" strip, cross

cut into four 6" blocks.

4) From Novelty, cut one 5 ½" square

### Sewing Instructions:

- 1) Place one dark 6" square right sides together (RST) with a 6" contrast square. ), draw a diagonal line on the back, and sew ¼" on either side of the diagonal line. Cut on the diagonal line to make half square triangles (HST). Trim the HSTs to 5 ½". Do the same with the four highlight 6" squares and the remaining four contrast 6" squares.
- 2) Sew 8 of HSTs of dark 1 into 3 rows. Sew 8 of HSTs of dark 2 into 4 rows. Following the illustration above, sew the remaining HSTs into rows with either a highlight HST or 2 highlight HSTs and the novelty squares.
- 3) Sew the 10 rows together.



## Drop Blocks



**Quilt Size:** 40" x 52"

**Finished Row Size:** 6"

**Sashing Size:** 2"

**Fabric requirements:**

Contrast (white): 1¼ yd (42" WOF)

6 coordinating fabrics: ¼ yd each

(FQ will work)

**Cutting Instructions:**

1) From each coordinating fabric cut one 6 ½" strip, cross cut into three 7.5"x 6 ½" blocks and two 3.5"x 6 ½" blocks.

2) From the Contrast fabric cut fifteen 2 ½" width of fabric (WOF) strips. Piece three WOF strips at short ends, and subcut two 52 ½" outer border strips. Subcut twenty-four 6 ½" sashing strips.

Subcut seven 40 ½" sashing strips.

**Sewing Instructions:**

- 1) Sew one 6 ½" sashing strip to the 6 ½" side of all but three 7.5" blocks and three 3.5" blocks.
- 2) Arrange 6 rows of three 7.5" and two 3.5" blocks (each row includes one of the blocks with no side sashing) using a variety of each of the coordinating fabrics in each row.
- 3) Sew a 40 ½" sashing strip between each of the 6 rows.
- 4) Add the last two 40 ½" strips to the top and bottom of the quilt as border strips. Add the 52 ½" border strips to the sides.

## Broken Row by Row



**Quilt Size:** 40" x 50"

**Finished Row Size:** 5"

**Sashing Size:** 2"

### **Fabric requirements:**

Contrast (white):  $\frac{1}{4}$  yd

5 coordinating fabrics:  $\frac{1}{3}$  yd each

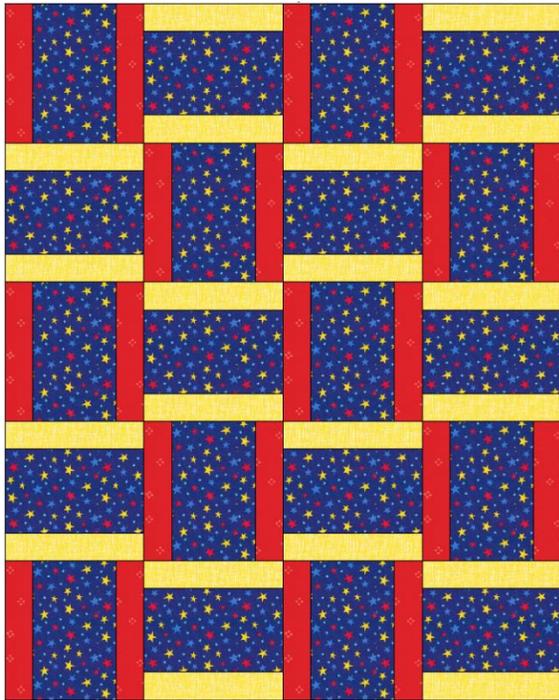
### **Cutting Instructions:**

- 1) From each coordinating fabric cut two 5" width of fabric (WOF) strips.
- 2) From the contrast fabric cut three 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ " WOF strips. Piece the three WOF strips at short ends and subcut two 50  $\frac{1}{2}$ " sashing strips.

### **Sewing Instructions:**

- 1) Select one coordinating fabric to be both the top and bottom row.  
Alternate the remaining fabrics and sew all rows together along the long edge.
- 2) Even one edge and cut across the rows creating 8", 5", and 23" lengths.
- 3) Rotate the 5" length.
- 4) Sew the contrast sashing strips between the three lengths.

## Rail Fence



**Quilt Size:** 40" x 50"

**Finished Block Size:** 10"

### **Fabric requirements:**

Focus fabric: 1 yd

2 coordinating fabrics: ½ yd each

### **Cutting Instructions:**

1) From the focus fabric cut five 6.5" strips. Subcut four 10½" blocks from each strip.

2) From each coordinating fabric cut five 2 ½" WOF strips. Subcut four 10½" strips from each strip.

### **Sewing Instructions:**

- 1) Sew a matching coordinating strip to either long side of a focus fabric block.
- 2) Rotate one set of coordinating color blocks by 90°.
- 3) Sew five rows of four alternating blocks.

## Bigger Brighter Bento Box



**Quilt Size:** 40" x 50"

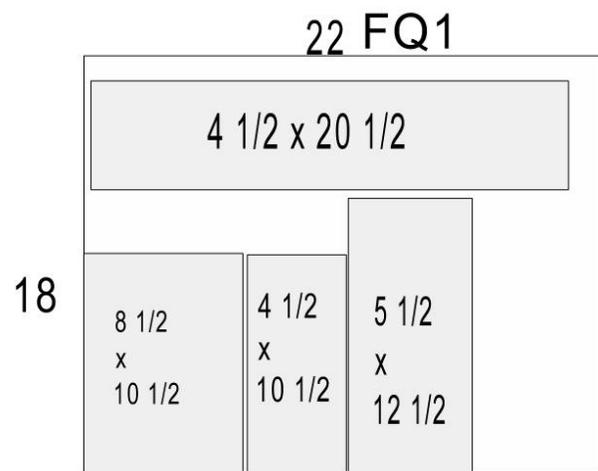
**Finished Block Size:** 20" x 25"

### Fabric requirements:

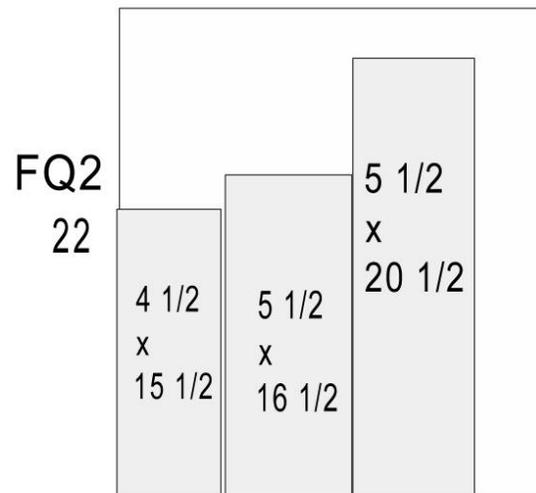
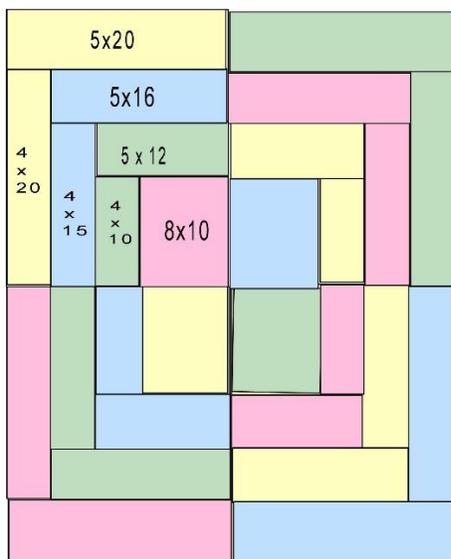
2 each of 4 coordinating fat quarters (or ½ yd each of 4 fabrics)

### Cutting Instructions:

1) Cut pieces out of each fat quarter as shown below.



### Sewing Instructions:



- 1) Sew alternating colors as shown to make 4 corners of your Bento Box.
- 2) Sew the 4 quarters together.