

Be A Quilt Maker

Anticipatory Set: Have you ever noticed that quilts come in different sizes and shapes. Pioneer women were very proud of their sewing ability and constructed all of the family's clothes and bedding. Clothes were recycled into quilts, which contained many memories for the families as well as keeping them warm in the harsh winters.

Another community get together was a quilting bee. What do you know about a quilting bee?

Purpose: Students will be able to realize the importance of community involvement and the sharing of work.

Objective: The students will learn basic geometric shapes and learn what shapes are formed when divided, i.e. a square becomes two triangles or two rectangles when divided in half. Student will design a quilt block in the log cabin style. Once the nine by nine quilt block is completed, students will put them together to create a class quilt. Quilts can be made from scrap booking paper, construction paper or fabric.

Teaching to the Objective:

1. Show examples of pieced quilts and have the students identify the geometric shapes and try to have them identify nested shapes such as triangles in squares. Talk about why quilts were made and how much history can be put into a quilt.
2. Introduce vocabulary: quilt, geometric shapes, etc.
3. Give students nine patch grid, explaining why it is called a nine patch. Do one full square together using the overhead emphasizing accurate use of the ruler. Use the log cabin pattern.
4. Emphasize accuracy and measurement.
5. Practice several paper quilt block in the log cabin style.
6. Students should pick their favorite one to be included in the paper quilt.

Assessment: Student will complete one log cabin quilt block to be included in the class paper quilt. Have students write a paragraph about this experience and how putting together their paper quilt was like a quilting bee.

Extension: Students make choose to make fabric quilt blocks with the help of adult volunteers.

Students may choose to try other quilt block patterns provided. Using scrapbook paper will provide more variety and allow the quilter to use more contrast in the quilt block they create.

Have students use the patchwork quilt grid to create their own quilt block using squares and triangles.

The Quilting Bee

Quilt making has been around for a very long time, as early as 1750. However, between the years of 1830 to 1870, quilt making in America was at its height. Beyond the Mississippi, materials were lacking, so many of the individuals on the prairies would turn their old calico dresses into the famous patchwork quilts. Economics made the patchwork quilt popular until the ascendancy of the machine industry of the nineteenth century.

In Colonial day, when every piece of cloth was brought from Europe at an opulent cost, each scrap left from the cutting of clothing was worth as much as its equivalent to the garment itself. Thus the "Crazy Patch," quilt was invented. Each piece of cloth was fit together so that not a strand of the valuable material was wasted. It mainly consisted of silks, ribbons, wool and velvets. It not only was the humblest of all bed-coverings, but it served the purpose of keeping the family warm on those cold winter nights.

Soon the trading of scraps became a social event amongst neighbors. Persons in a local area would trade their scraps to make the quilts unique. Everyone would buy from the general store from the same bolts of material out of necessity. Many of the quilts found in that region would contain the same materials, but would be pieced together differently.

Soon no function was more important than the quilting-bee. Before inviting any quests, the woman of the house would usually piece together at least two to three quilts before her neighbors were invited to attend the quilting bee. Then she would borrow any extra quilting frames needed to get the job done. The whole countryside was invited to come early, and make a day of it. The quilts were put in and finished. Usually, the girls would have relays to show off their crafty needlework. Then the evening would start with a feast; all men, women, and children were invited to attend the party.

Many of the quilts received high honors at fairs such as the local fair. Out of eighty --five firsts, second, and third prizes awarded for craftsmanship; twenty-six firsts and second prizes were won by women. The prizes won were either books or money.

The dower chest for the bride was supposed to hold at least a, "baker's dozen," or more quilts. Twelve were made to resemble the view of everyday use, but the thirteenth was a, bride's quilt, a piece so elaborate that it was a pain to make. The bride's quilt was started only after a girl was definitely engaged. Top after top were pieced together, they were laid away to await quilting, or until the bride announced that she was to be married. The reason for this custom was the cost of the wadding or backing. This expenditure was pointless until a new home was about to be furnished. Therefore, to invite quests to the quilting of a girl's "tops" was like announcing that she was to be married.

Due to the economical stresses of the mid-eighteen hundreds, the quilting-bee became a celebration amongst neighbors. It was a way to socialize and to accomplish their tasks at the same time. Women received much recognition for their ornate needlework. Some even announced that they were to be married at such events. Over all the quilting bee is an exciting part of American history, and many of the customs have carried over to our day.

Children's books

- *The Patchwork Quilt* by Valerie Flournoy
- *Tender Loving Covers* by Tni Phillips and Juanita Simonich
- *Patchwork Quilts to Make For Children* by Margaret Rolfe
- *Quilt a Koala* by Margaret Rolfe
- *Sam Johnson and the Blue Ribbon Quilt* by Lisa Campbell Ernst
- *The Rag Coat* by Lauren Mills
- *The Patchwork Lady* by Mary K. Whittington
- *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson
- *The Boy and the Quilt* by Shirley Kurtz
- *The Mountains of Quilt* by Nancy Willard and Tomie DePaola
- *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold
- *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacco
- *The Quilt Story* by Tony Johnston