

TRADITIONAL WEDDING RING
Instructions written and illustrated by
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Hinesville, Georgia, Good Ol' US of A

With Eternal Gratitude to
Kathy and Tim

The Wedding Ring is traditional block in the public domain. I claim no rights to the design of this block or to the layouts illustrated in this booklet.

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I would love to see pictures of your quilts when you're done. If you give me your permission I'll include them in future adaptations and printings of this booklet.

TRADITIONAL WEDDING RINGS

I can't tell you exactly how much fabric you'll need for this quilt. That will depend on how many different colors and patterns you use; how big you make the rings; your border/binding choice(s); and the overall size. Estimates are provided for two sample layouts, each in an oversized twin-size, using one fabric for the background and six fabrics for the ring pieces. When printed "as is", neither reduced nor enlarged, this pattern will result in rings approximately 13" in diameter.

SUPPLIES:

The pattern

Background fabric

At least six different colors/patterns for the arc pieces. (This is a good quilt for using up scraps.)

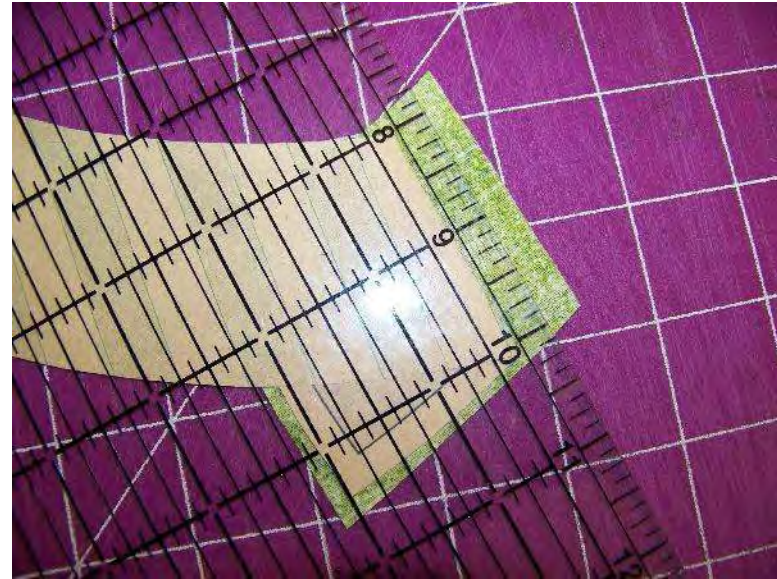
You'll also need a marking pen and if they're handy, a glue stick and a couple of manila folders or thin cardboard

NOTE: The color of the background fabric is a light green in some photographs and marbled orange in others. That's because I changed my mind about my background fabric while working on these instructions and switched from the green to the orange. Please don't let that confuse you. When referring to the photographs, substitute your own background choice for both of mine.

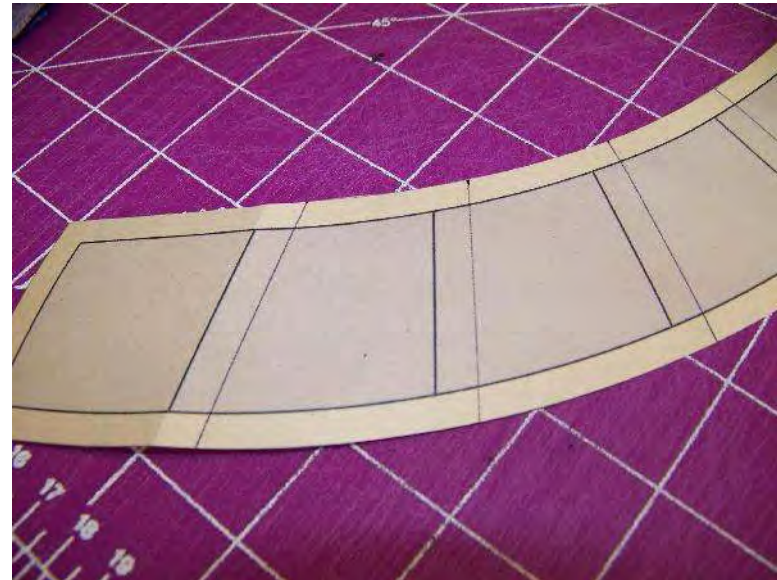
Once the pattern is printed, cut out the paper piecing templates for the arcs. You will need one set of 8 arcs (4 small, 4 large) for each Wedding Ring.



To figure out how big a scrap you need for the first piece on each ring, fold the pattern back and lay it on a scrap. When you find one big enough to leave fabric "hanging off" all four sizes, with about 1/4" for the seam allowance between the first and second piece, you'll know the minimum size for all your first pieces.



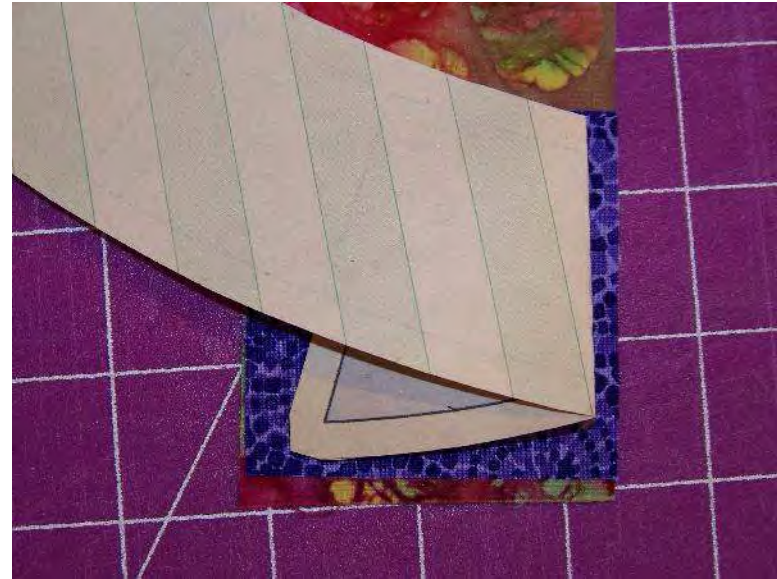
To place your pieces and get about a 1/4" seam allowance, you can fold back the pattern and measure obsessively; or you can "eyeball" it; or you can draw reference lines on the pattern. Try all the methods and pick the one that works best for you.



With the printed pattern facing you, lay down the first piece - back of fabric facing you - and the second piece right side facing up. Allow about a 1/4" seam to the right of the stitching line.

Another way too look at it is to picture a sandwich. The bottom layer is the second piece, right side facing up. The middle is the first piece, back of fabric facing up. The top layer is the pattern, with the printed side facing up so you can see the stitching lines.

You'll use this system for pieces 3 and beyond, too. The next piece being added will be the bottom layer, the piece already attached to the paper will be the middle, and the pattern will always be on top.



I want you to notice something very important about the placement of the second piece.

Notice that it's placed "long ways" up and down, and that I've only left a bit more than 1/4" of it "dangling" below the pattern.

This is very important. You'll want to do the same thing with each of the rest of the pieces as you add them. If you start at the left end of the arc, it will curve up as you add the pieces.

Notice, also, that the rest of the pieces are longer than the first by about an inch. That's so, as you work your way around the curve, the scrap will cover the pattern completely. The extra fabric at the top is there to make sure you have enough to completely cover the next section, plus seam allowance. There will be excess to trim away later.

Today, we use 2" squares for the first piece, and 2" x 2.5" for all the others. If your finished wedding rings will be larger or smaller than our 1 3/4" rings, experiment with extra patterns and scraps until you figure out the best size for your particular size rings.

Ok. Take that sucker to the machine, and stitch. 😊

Don't be askeered. Show it who's boss! 😊



Repeat the steps so far until the first two pieces have been attached to all 8 pieces of the arcs

When pieces 1 and 2 have been sewn to the paper, press them open.

You can finger press or do it with an iron.



Now that pieces 1 and 2 are attached to the paper, it's time for #3.

Please notice that I trimmed away some of the excess from 1 & 2 ... but not until AFTER I had pressed them open. Trimming away the excess is optional. I noticed, though, that it did make it easier for me to line up the next piece each time I added to the ring.

This photo illustrates how much easier it is to line it all up if you draw the reference lines 1/4" away from the stitching line. Eventually, I didn't need those lines, but they sure helped at first. Once it's lined up, take it to the machine and sew on the stitching line. Repeat this for all 8 ring patterns.

Keep going, adding pieces until you've completed the arcs



Up 'til now, I've focused on the steps you'd take to make sure all your pieces around the ring matched the pattern exactly. It's quite a bit of work and will be slow going until you get used to the steps and can do them without thinking so hard the whole time.

BUT ... who says they pieces have to match the pattern exactly? Who says they have to be anything or any shape at all in particular? The main reason for using the paper piecing pattern is to make sure you have the right size and shape for the arcs you'll be sewing to the background fabric.

You could just as easily do this the same way you would a string quilt or a crazy quilt. Just add pieces of any size and shape as you go along the ring. Lay them down in any way that pleases you or the shape of the scraps.

Once they're all on, and trimmed to the pattern, you'll have something spontaneous and fun to build your rings with. And not nearly as big a headache. 😊



When you have finished stitching the arcs (pieces of the ring), trim away all the excess fabric to the cutting lines around the patterns. Trim carefully.



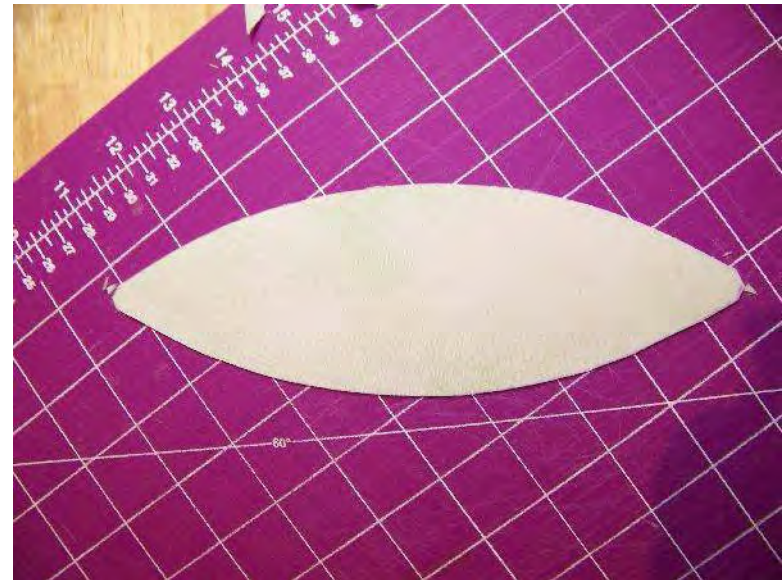
Once they're all trimmed, remove the paper and press the seams open.

Pressing them open isn't a rule but I couldn't believe how much easier it was to fit and sew the arcs to the melon centers when I pressed open instead of to the side. Definitely worth the extra few minutes' work.

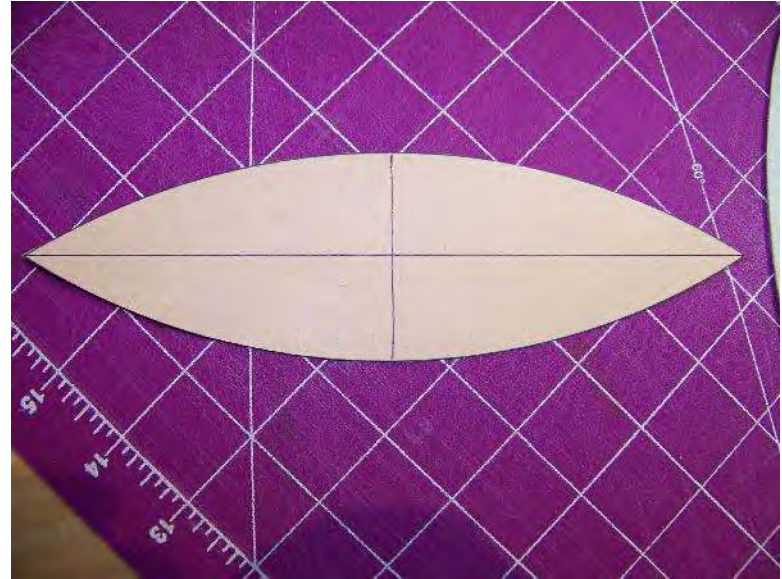


Time now make those melon center templates. You actually need to print two melon pattern pieces. Here's where that manila folder comes in. Glue, or glue stick the pattern pieces to the folder. Cut one out along the outer edge. Cut the other out along the stitching line.

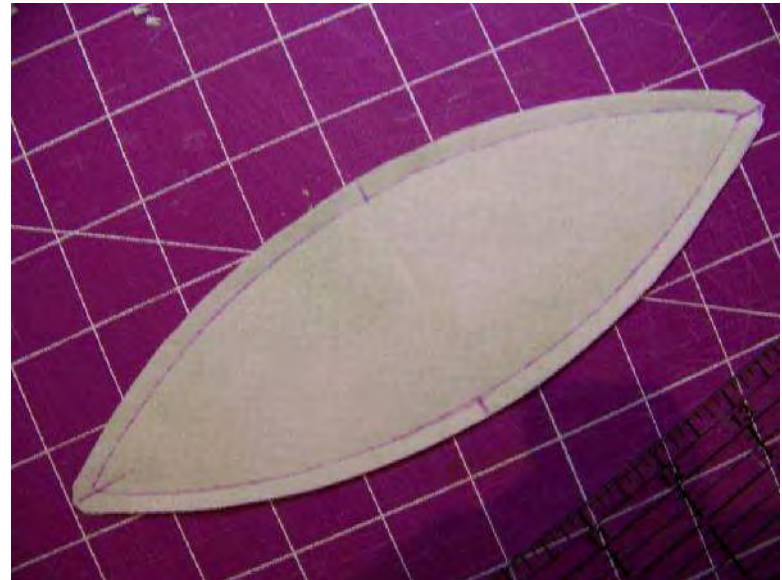
Trace around the larger one to make your melon centers from the background fabric.



Draw horizontal and vertical lines on the smaller one to use later as reference points.

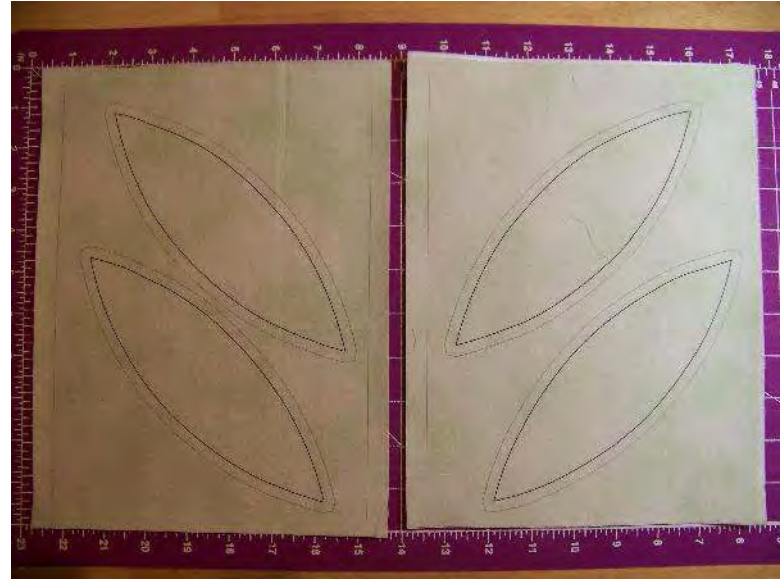


Lay the smaller one in the center of the fabric piece, trace around it for the stitching line, and mark the reference points.



You need four of these for each Wedding Ring.

OR you could be really lazy, like me. Iron the fabric, face down, to freezer paper and print the pieces onto the back, then cut them out.



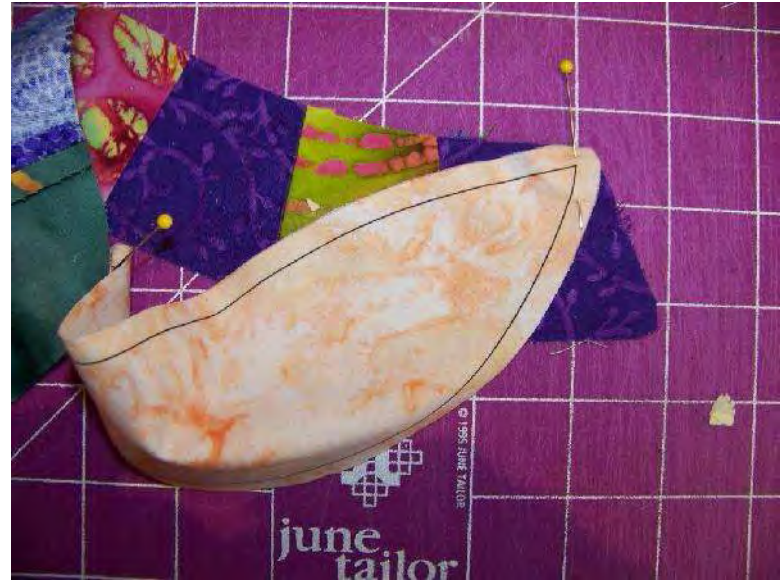
Now, let's connect those melons to the center.

Notice those funny little points on the ends of the arcs and melons. They are odd, but very important.

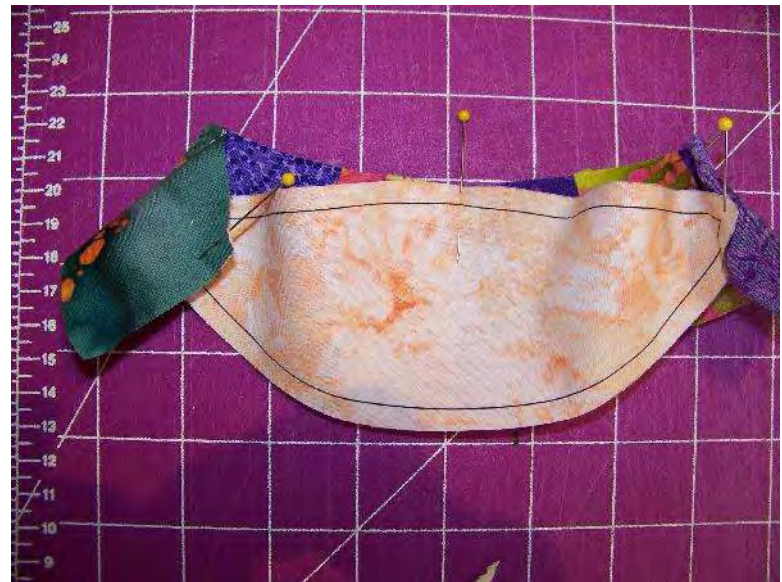
Take one of the short arcs and one melon. Line up the funny point on one end of the melon with the corresponding end of the arc. Make sure the stitching line on the melon is facing up.



Do the same with the other end.



Then pin the midpoint of the melon to the midpoint of the arc.
Don't worry about how goofy it looks.



Now hold one end of the melon between your index and middle finger, and the midpoint between your thumb and pinkie. Very gently let the melon center and arc stretch "into" each other. Put pins in between.

If you pressed open your arc seams, it will go together with only a little fuss.



Do the same at the other end, except the midpoint is between index and second finger; end is between thumb and pinkie.



Please note: this photo shows the pinned pieces from the back.

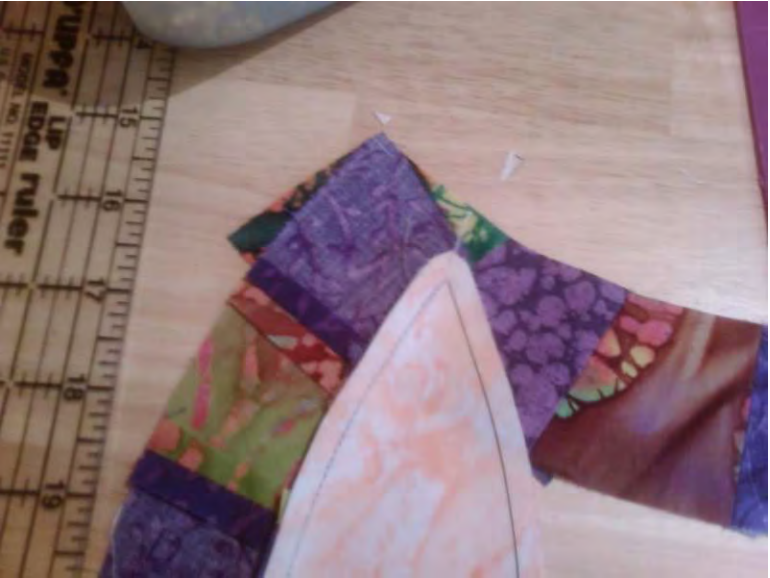


When you stitch the melon to the arc, sew slowly. Remove each pin just before the presser foot passes over it.

When you've sewn that seam, press toward the arc. Because everything is on a bias, you won't need to clip anything.



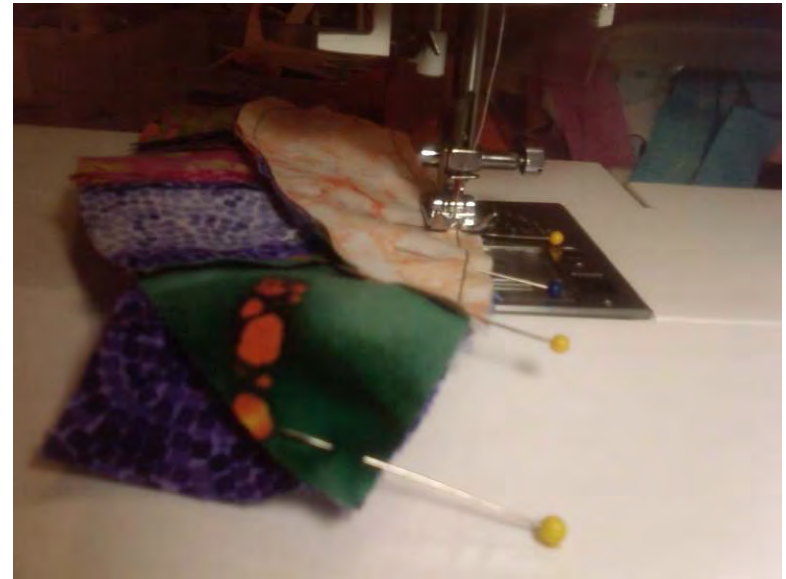
Time for the other side of the melon. This time, it's the funny points of the arc that line up to the melon.





As you get more comfortable with the process, you'll need fewer and fewer pins. Eventually, you'll be able to instinctively keep the melons and arcs aligned properly to each other as you sew around the curve. You'll be surprised how quickly that happens. When I make mine now, I usually start with a lot of pins, but by the time I've sewn one or two, and have gotten the "rythym" back, I need only to pin the ends of the second arcs to make sure they line up with each other. Then I put one pin in the middle, just to make the pieces easier to handle.

Don't stress over it. Use as many or as few pins as you need to be comfortable and confident. Baste with a needle and thread if that's what helps you most.



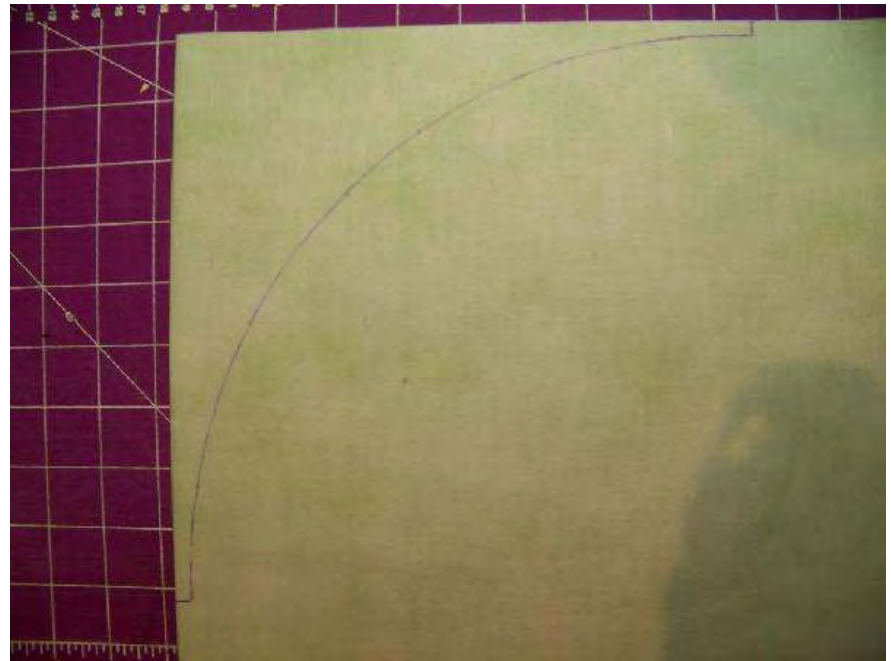
Here's the completed, pressed melon from the back. Note that the background is pressed flat, while the arcs tuck under. This will not only look better, it'll make quilting it easier.



After you've glued the pattern piece to your manila folder, cut it out. Then, using your ruler and rotary cutter, carefully trim away the seam allowances from the square sides.

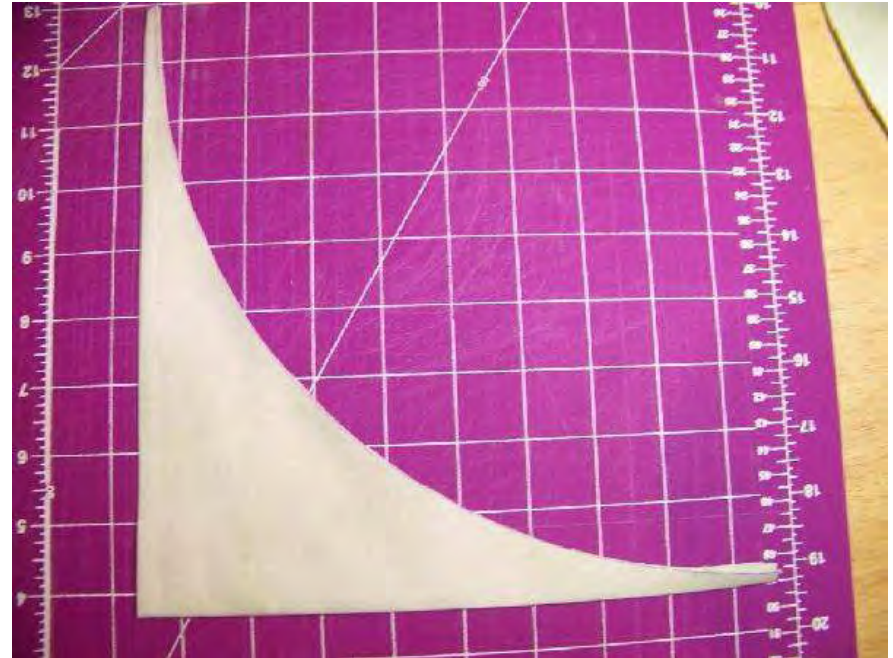


To make the center, fold your background piece into quarters. Very carefully line up the straight sides of the pattern piece with the FOLDS, and then trace it with a marking pencil.



Carefully cut it out while it's still folded. Use very sharp scissors or - if you are very brave - your rotary cutter.

It will look like this



When you open up your center, it will look like this.

Don't press it flat just yet. Instead, use the folds to show you where to make your reference marks. Make the marks on the back, please.



Use the original folds to mark the little hands and legs.

Fold it in quarters the other way to get your references for the curves.

(Sorry. The fabrics I used for these photos are the same on both sides. 😊)

If it's difficult to see the markings on the hands and feet in the photos, just remember that I simply marked right on the folds. The markings don't have to be any particular length. They're there just to help you see the midpoint later, when you're sewing the center and melons to each other.

In addition to marking the hands and feet, I fold my centers in half, both ways, and then mark the centers of the curves to use later as reference points.



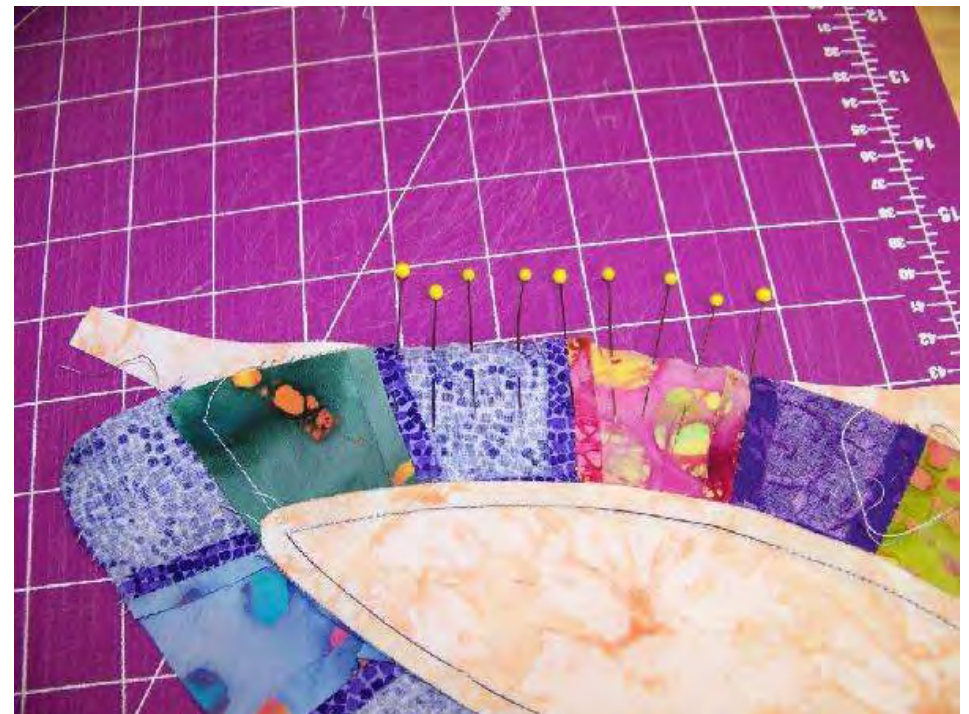
We are now ready to attach a melon to the center. When you lay them next to each other, things won't look as though they're going to fit.

However, you will eventually see that they do fit. No kidding. 😊



There are a number of ways to attach the melons. One way is to use the same method we did when attaching the arcs to the melons. That is to pin at the center and ends, then pin the heck out of it in between.

I started in the center, then pinned outward toward each end. It's only partially pinned in the photos but ... if you proceed carefully, you'll find that the two pieces go together more easily than you expect and things line up at the ends.



Another way is to pin or baste only the ends, and then take it to the machine. Sew slowly around the arc, lining it up as you go. You might need to stop every inch or so, lift the foot and re-align things.

You will need to stretch it juuuusssst a leeeeeetle bit to match up the top of the arch with the inner curve of the center.

When I used this method, I added a pin to the center when I was about two inches away, just to reassure myself. In the end, I found it wasn't totally necessary.





I just wanted to add a few close-up photos of the sewing. Hopefully, they'll clear up any confusion there may be about the whole "sewing without pins" thing.



Notice, please, that I was very careful to not sew wider than 1/4" at the ends. That keeps the arcs from overlapping at the intersections.



Now ... I pinned and/or basted my ends, then sewed verrrrrry slowly, so all my ends matched. I'm proud of that, naturally. BUT I suspect it wouldn't be the end of the world if the hands and feet accidentally got stretched a bit too much and dangled a tad off the ends of the arcs. If that happens, just make sure to trim away the excess, and then use it as your new "end" when you add the next arc.

Ok ... if it's more than 1/4" off ... play it safe and rippit so you can try again.



You'll see how the little reference marks we made earlier were helpful.



Here's what it looks like from the back when you're adding the second and remaining melons. You can see now how sewing a seam wider than 1/4" at the ends could cause problems.



If you make the seams too wide, and your melons overlap at the intersections, you should pick out the stitches and try again. If your melons end up too far apart at the intersections, you can go back and add some stitching without having to pick out any of the earlier stitching.

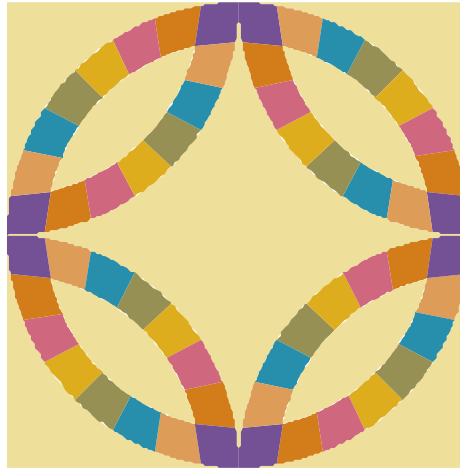




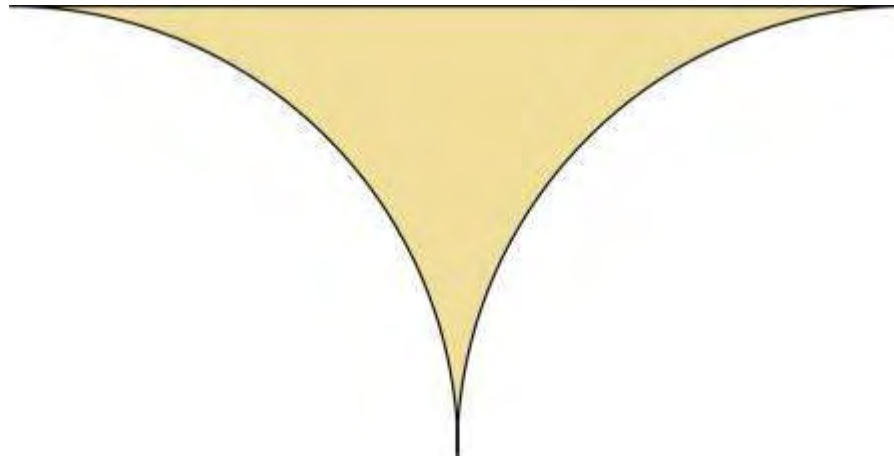
This is what I did with my ring. If I do this again, I'll make sure my ruffle contrasts better with the wedding ring. But no way was I going to take it off and make another one.



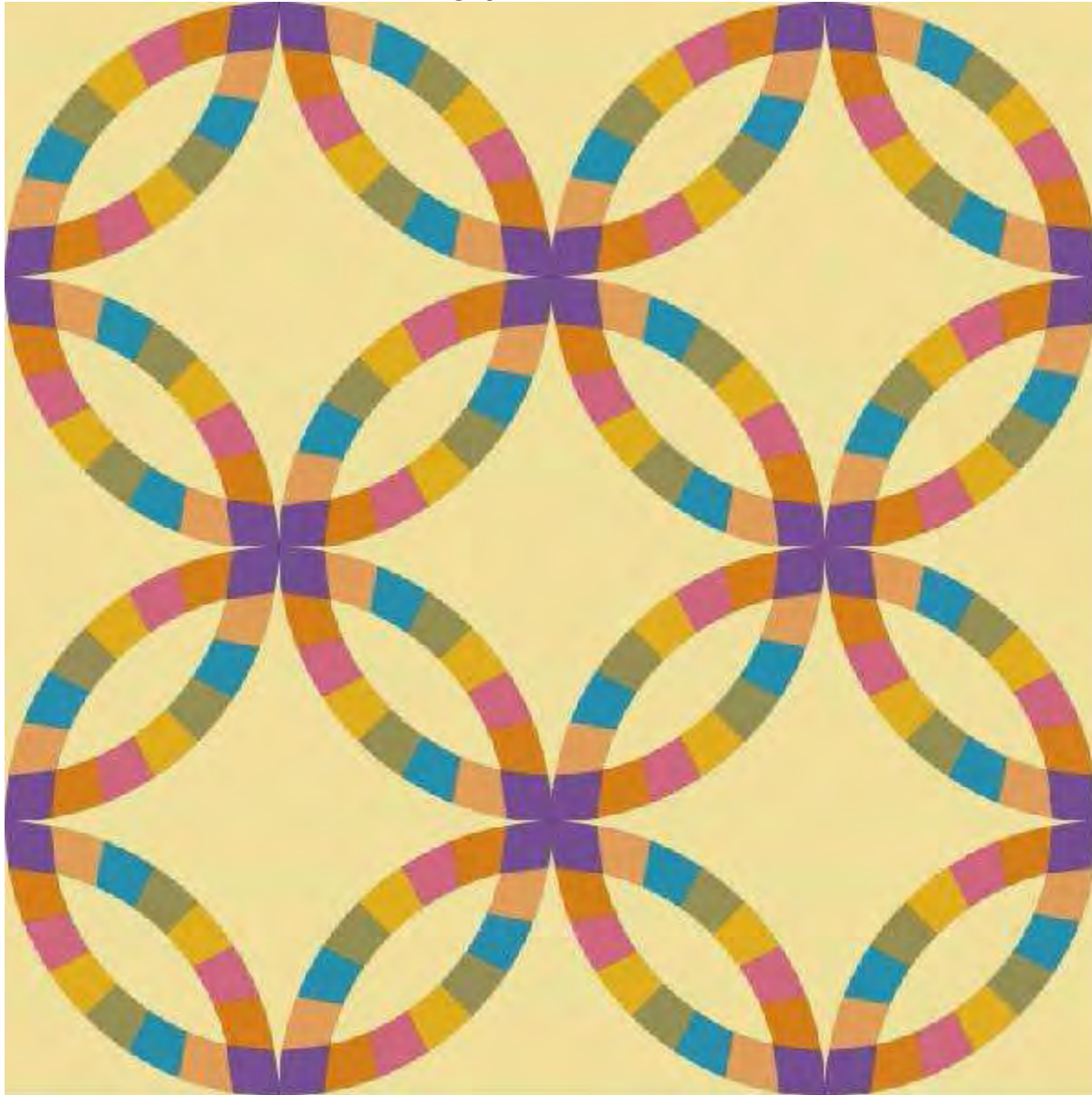
From this point on, the possibilities are many.
You can make a single block by using the pattern pieces to make corners.



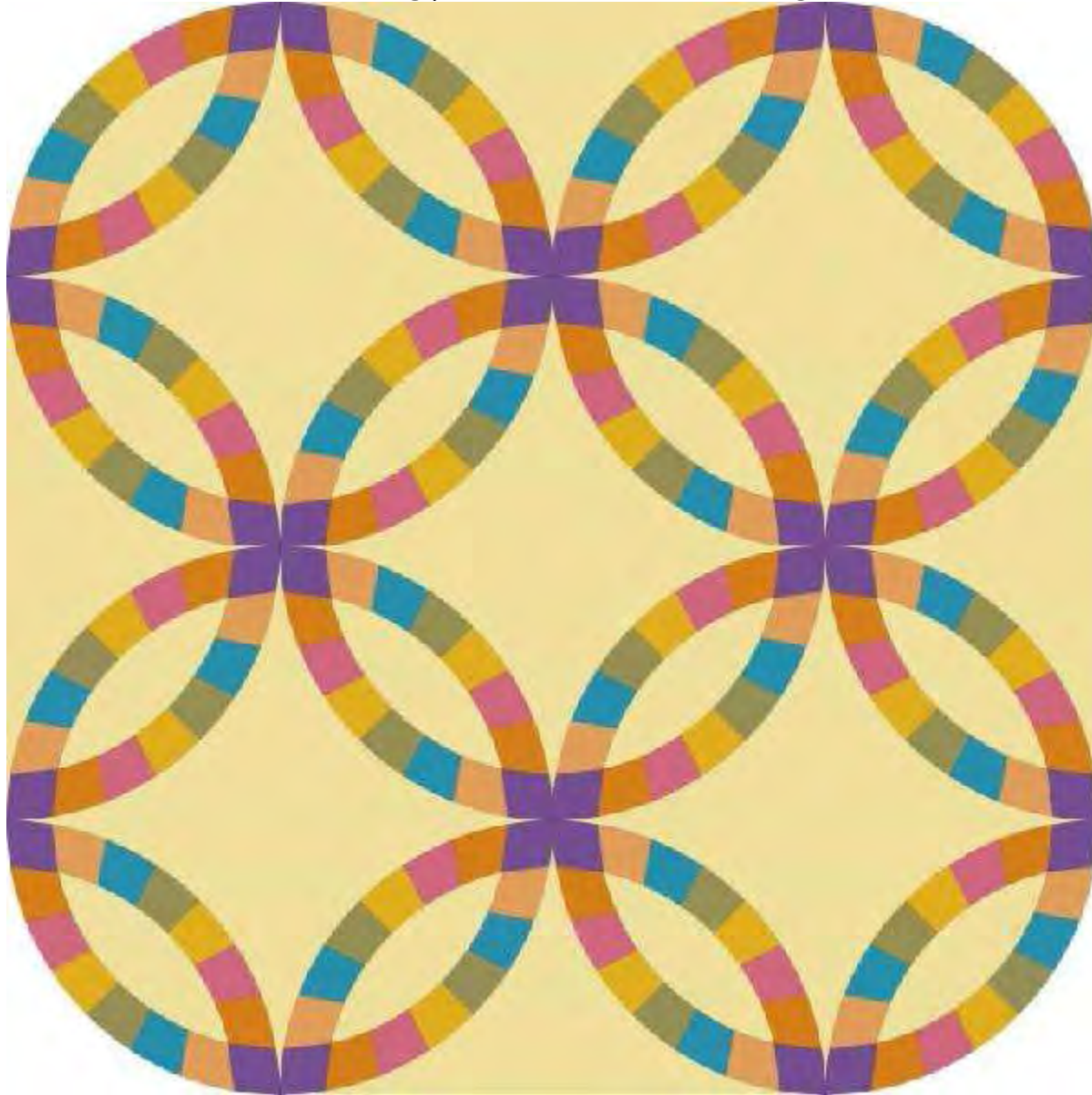
Do you remember how we used the pattern piece for the corners to make one solid center? You can make side "fillers" by cutting off only one of the straight side seam allowances, then folding the background fabric only once. Just remember to line up the side of the pattern *without* the seam allowance along the fold. When you open up the cut piece, it will look like this.



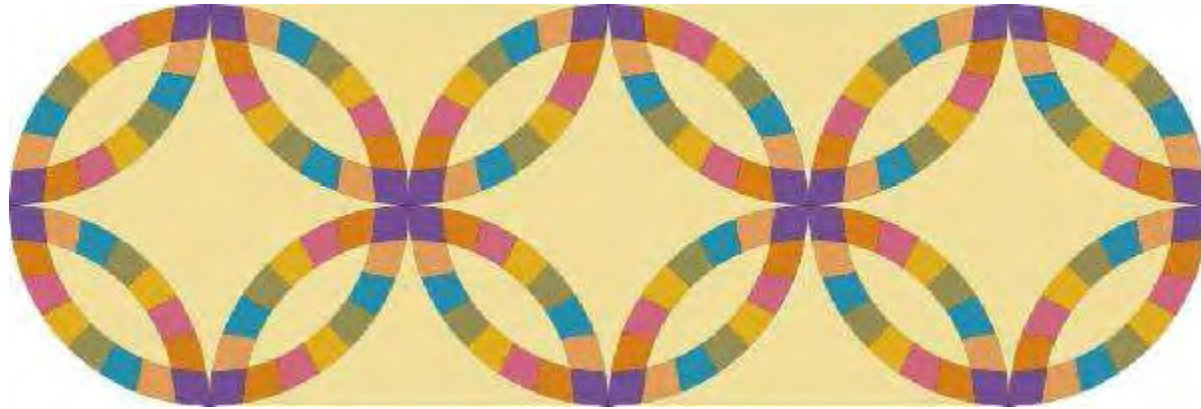
Here are 4 rings plus corners and side fillers.



You can attach rings, and then leave the outer edges round.

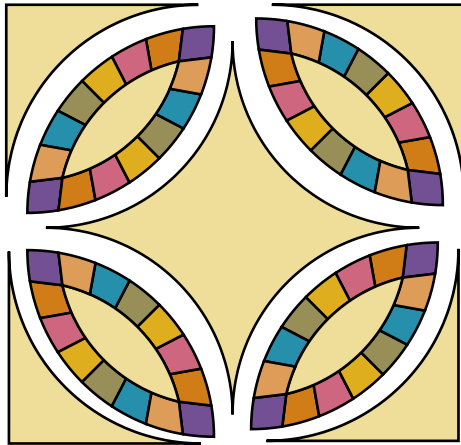
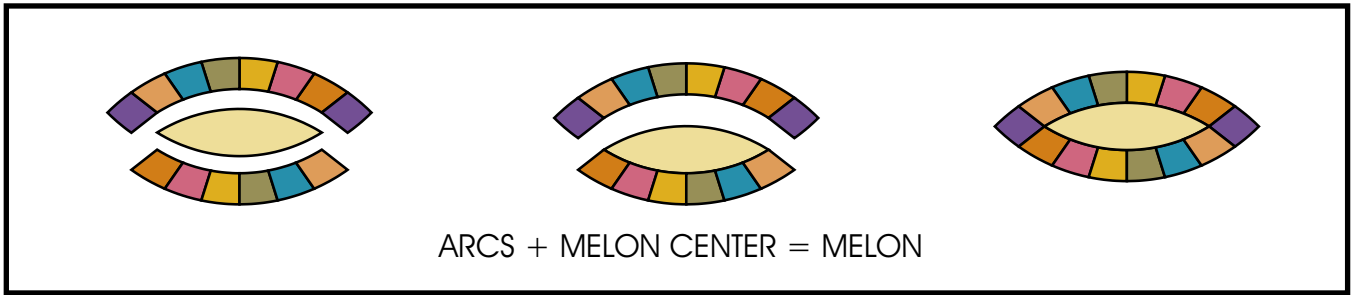


You can make a table runner...

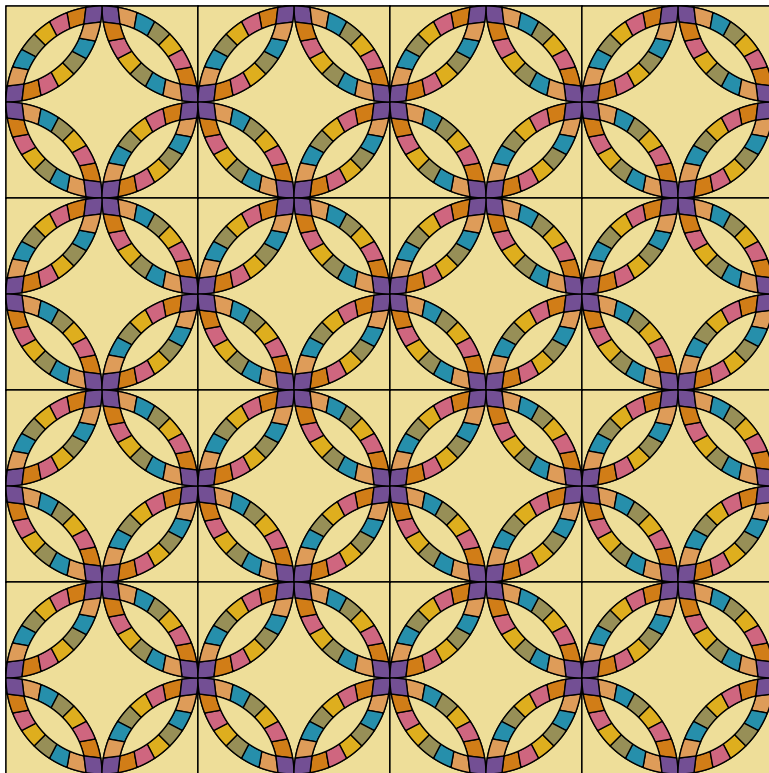
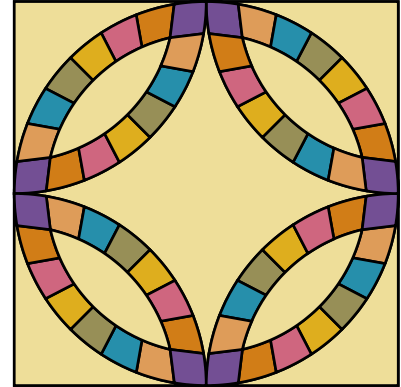


You can ... you can ...

you get the idea 😊

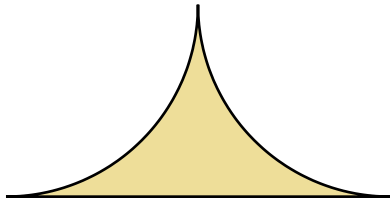


THE EASIEST WAY TO BUILD A WEDDING RING QUILT IS IN BLOCKS

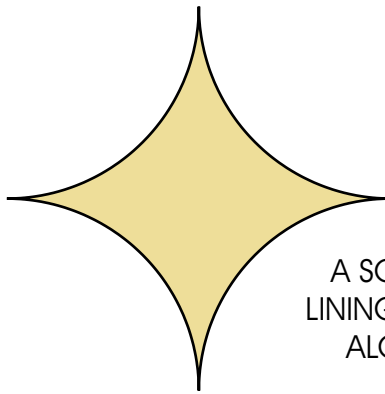


THE DRAWBACK TO THIS METHOD, THOUGH, IS ALL THE SEAMS RUNNING THROUGH THE CENTERS OF THE RINGS, OR BETWEEN THE RINGS.

AS YOU'LL SEE IN THE ILLUSTRATIONS ON THE PAGES COMING UP, YOU CAN ELIMINATE THOSE SEAMS BY REPLACING THE CORNER PIECES WITH MORE SOLID CENTERS AND HALF-CENTERS.

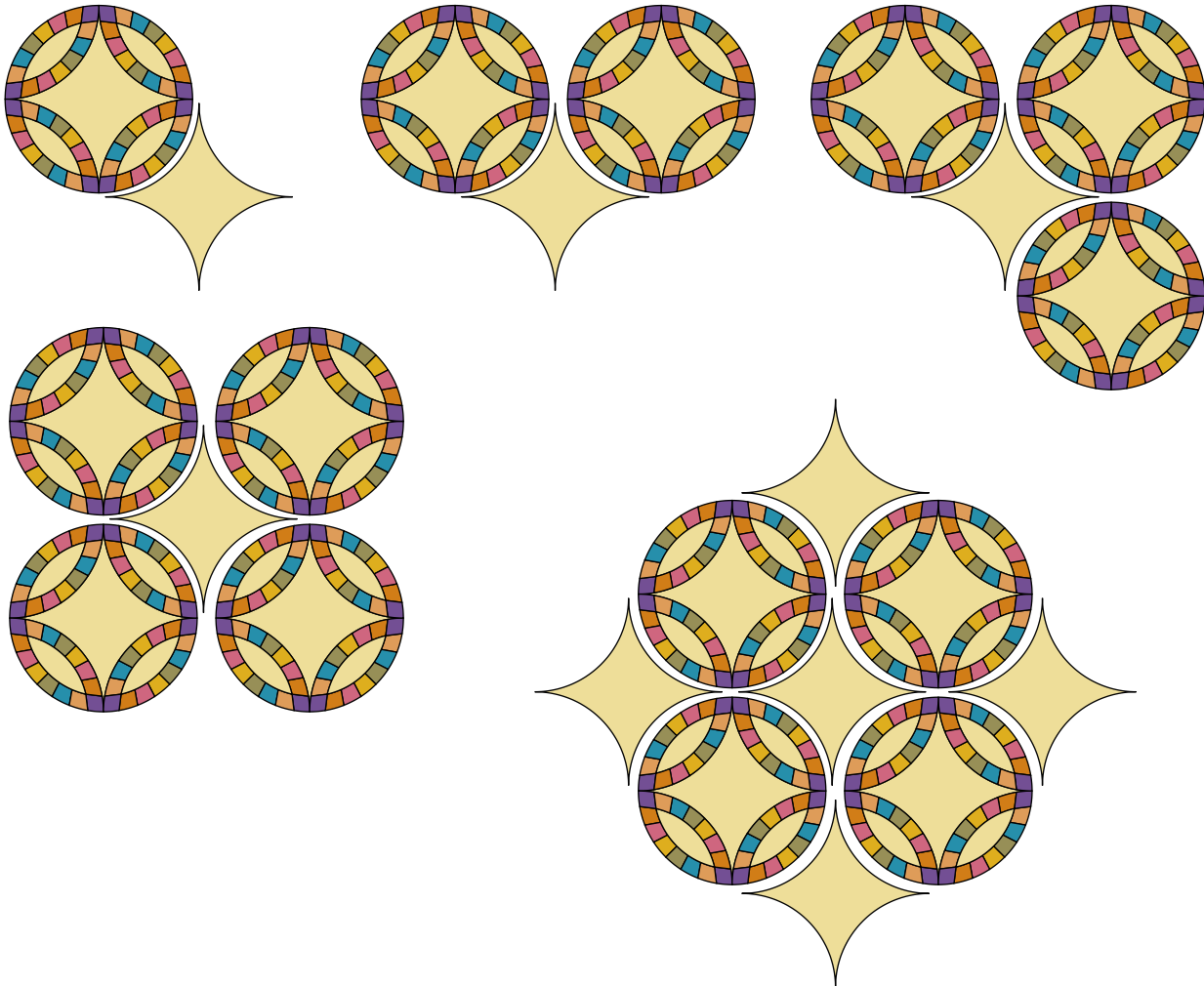


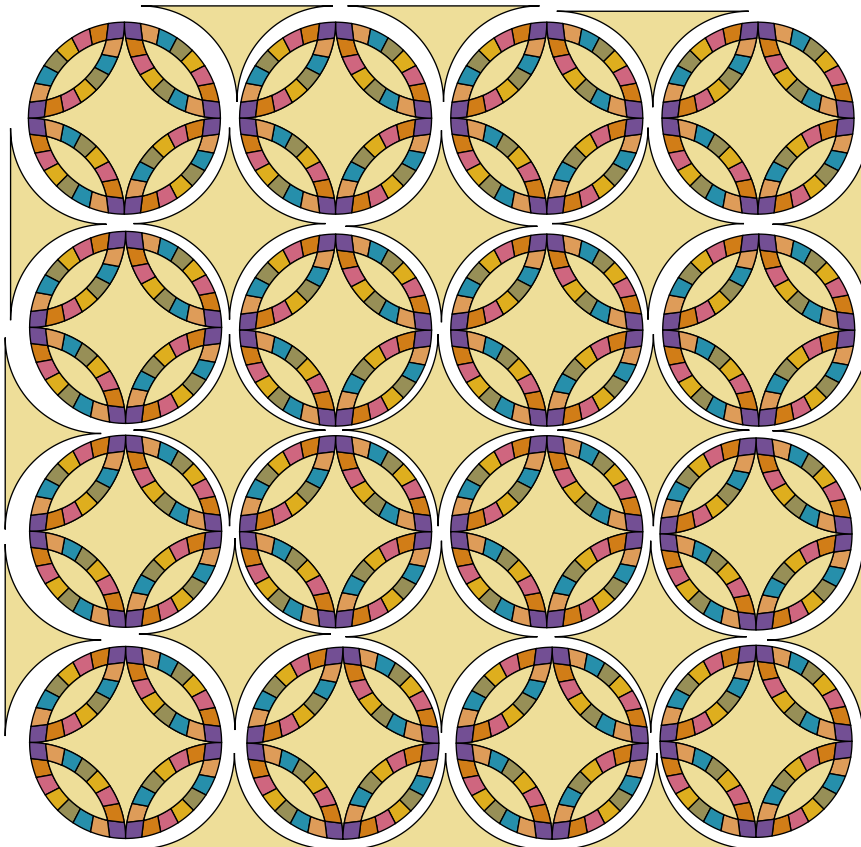
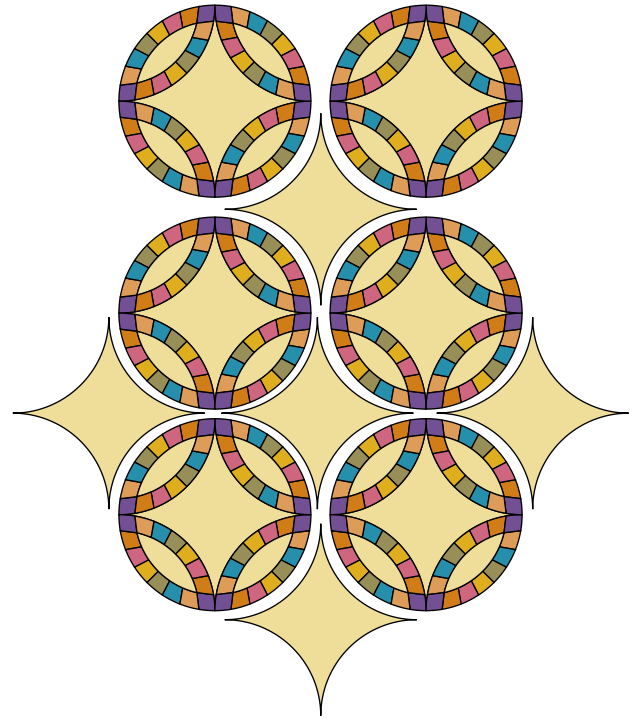
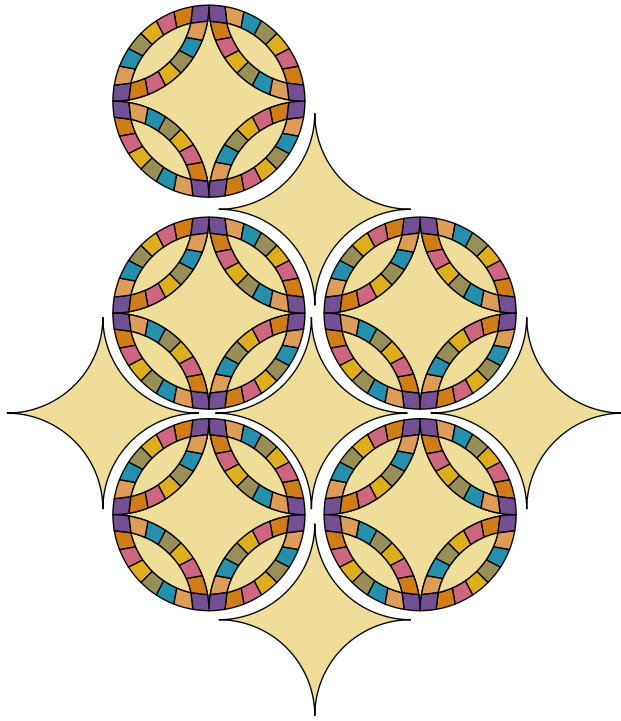
A HALF-CENTER, MADE BY
LINING UP A CORNER PATTERN
ALONG A SINGLE FOLD



A SOLID CENTER, MADE BY
LINING UP A CORNER PATTERN
ALONG A DOUBLE FOLD

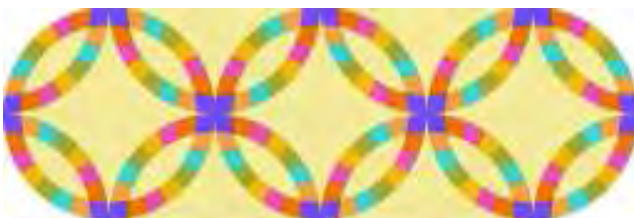
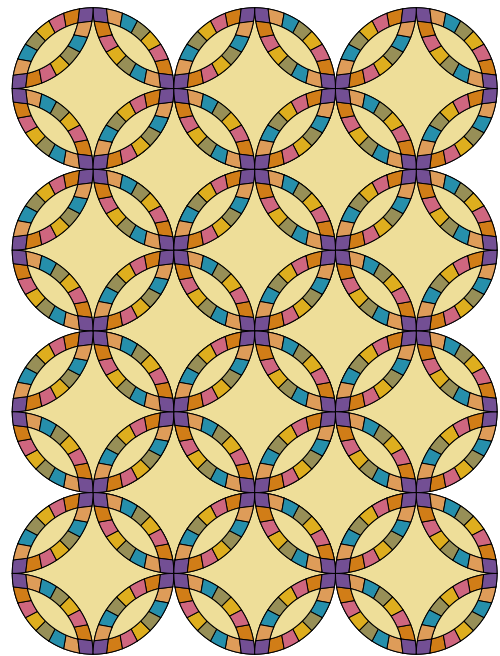
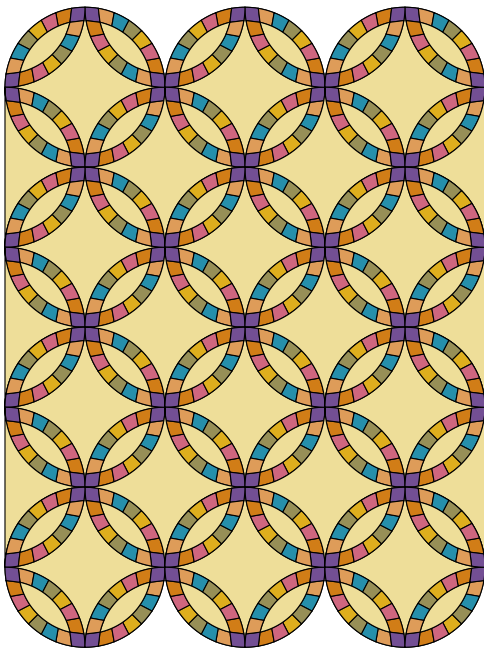
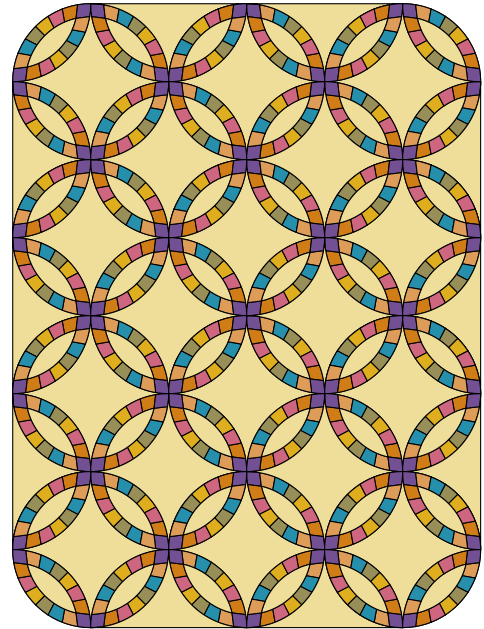
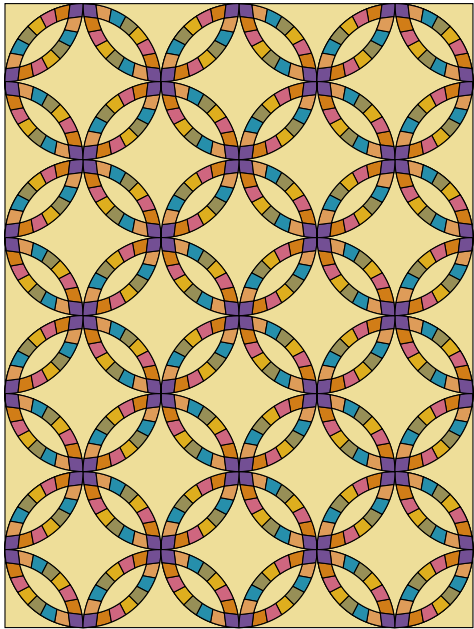
DO YOU REMEMBER THE STEPS AND SYSTEM WE USED TO ATTACH THE MELONS TO A CENTER TO
MAKE ONE RING? BY USING THAT SAME SYSTEM TO ATTACH COMPLETED RINGS TO MORE
CENTERS, YOU CAN BUILD A QUILT TO ANY FINISHED SIZE YOU WANT.



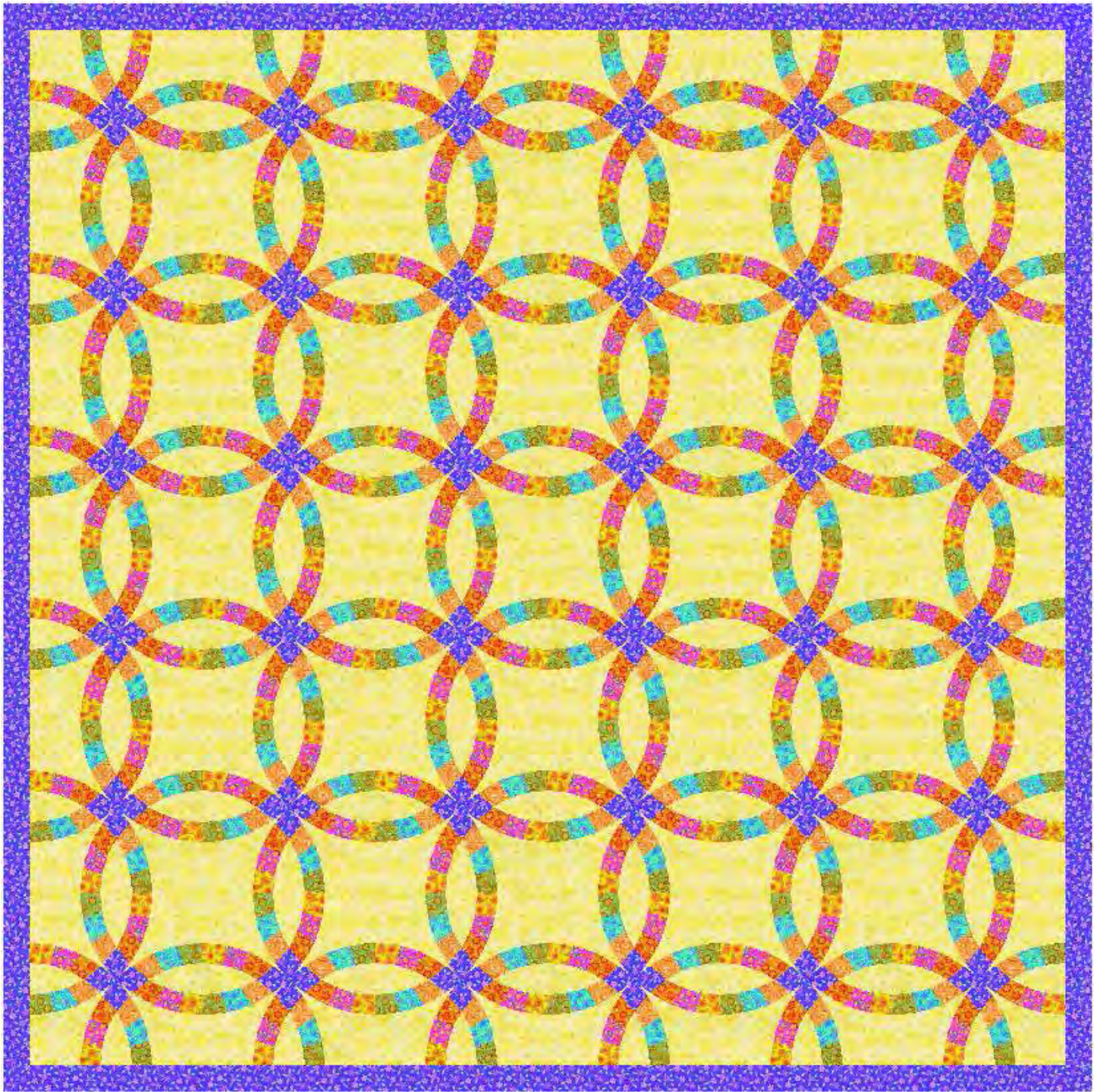


JUST KEEP ADDING CENTERS AND RINGS, BUILDING YOUR QUILT FROM THE CENTER OUT, UNTIL IT'S THE SIZE YOU WANT.

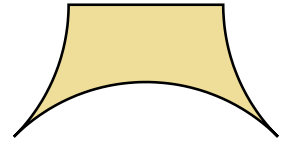
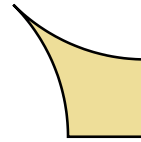
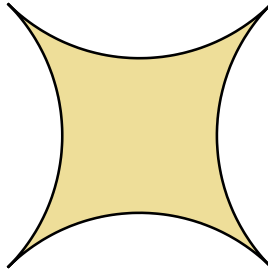
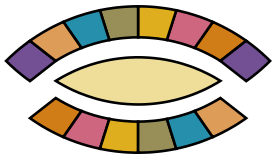
IF YOU WANT STRAIGHT SIDES, FILL IN THE "BLANKS" WITH HALF-CENTERS.



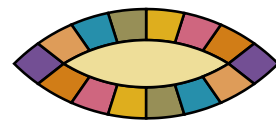
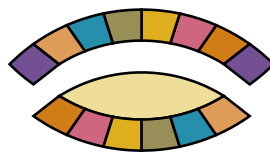
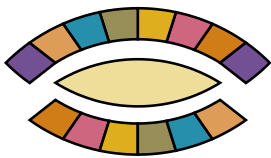
IT ONLY TAKES A FEW RINGS TO
MAKE A NIFTY RUNNER.



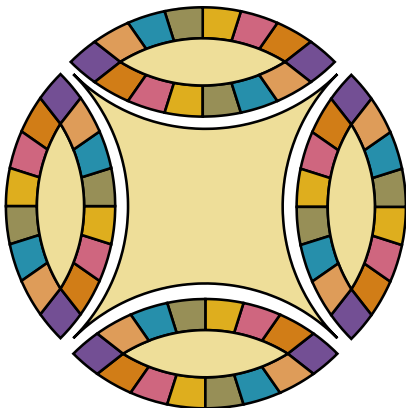
WHEN THE WEDDING RINGS ARE LAID OUT "ON-POINT" THE FINISHED QUILT WILL LOOK LIKE THIS



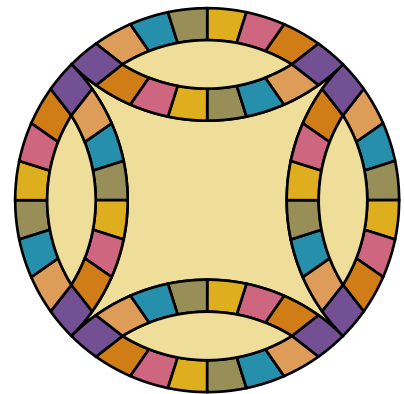
THESE ARE THE PIECES YOU WILL NEED FOR THE ON-POINT LAYOUT. THE NUMBER OF PIECES NEEDED WILL DEPEND UPON THE FINISHED SIZE OF YOUR QUILT



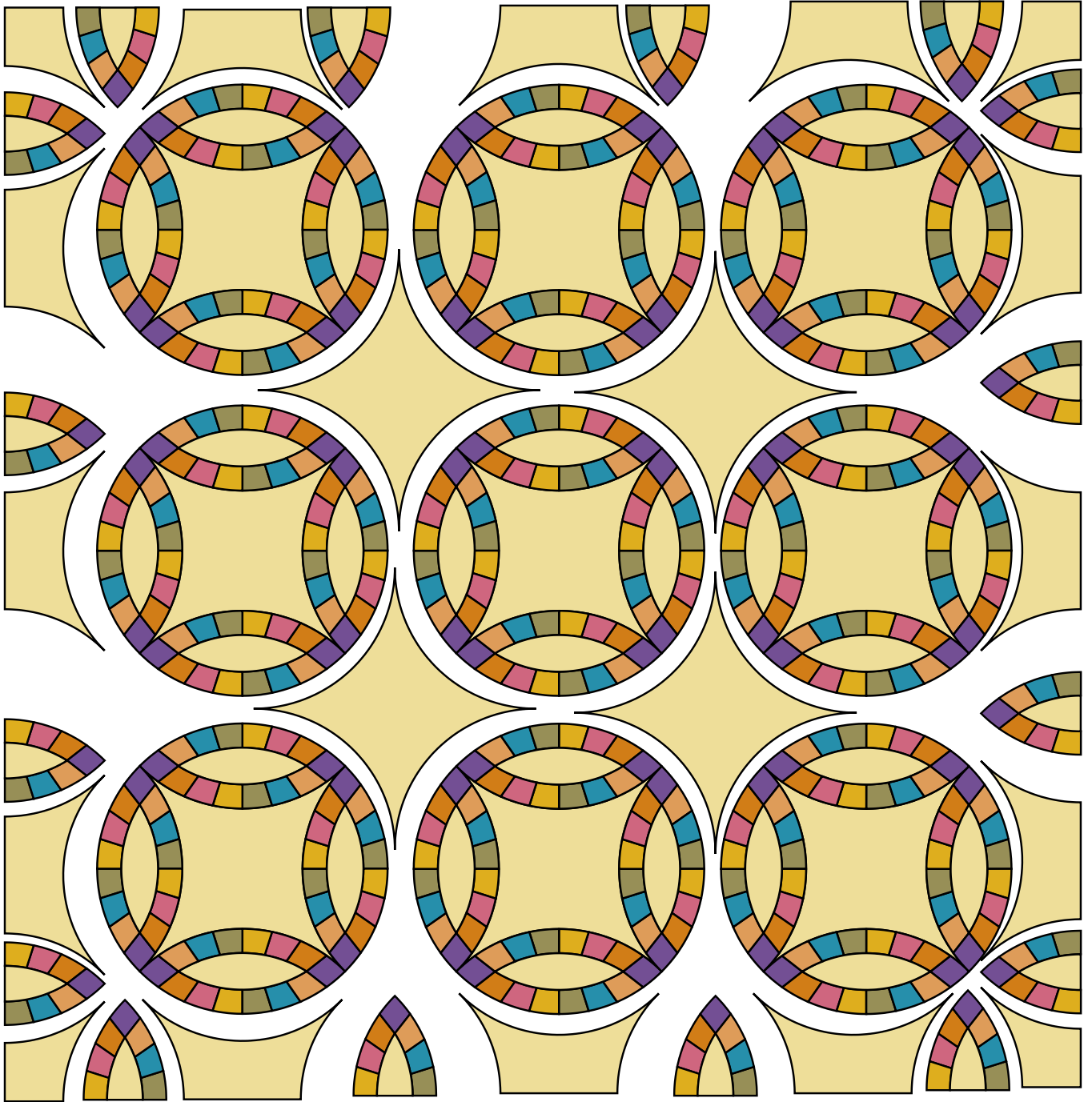
ARCS + MELON CENTER = MELON

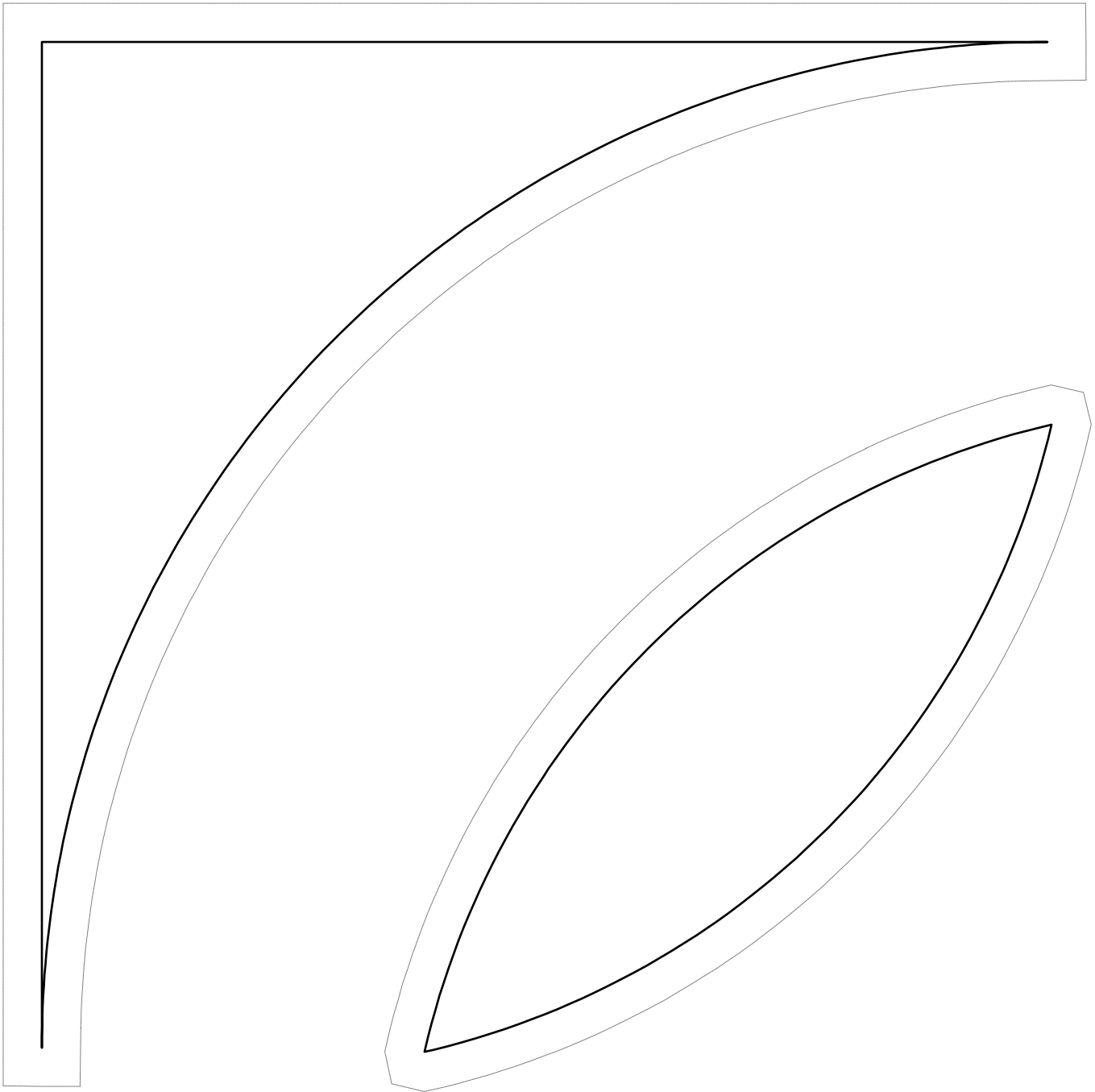


MELONS + CENTER = RING UNIT



HALF-ARCS + MELON HALF-CENTER = HALF-MELON





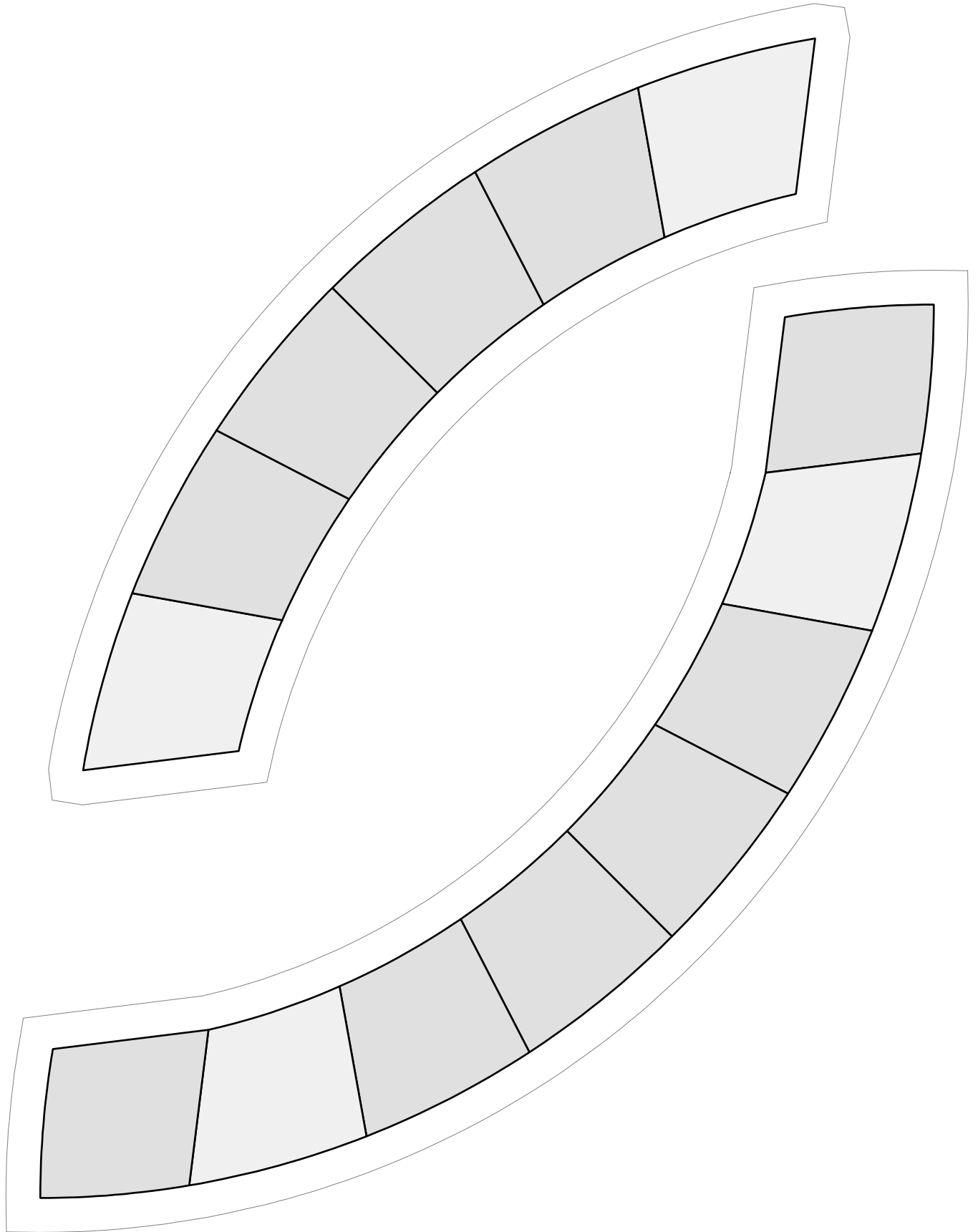
Pattern for Traditional Wedding Ring, 13.00 by 13.00 (inches)

Print one copy of Page 1 to make your pattern pieces for the Melon Centers, the Ring Centers, Side Fillers (aka Half-Centers), and to fill in the background between Wedding Rings when making a whole quilt.

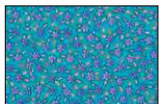
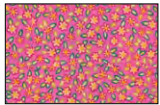
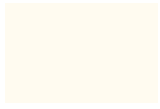
Print four copies of page 2 for each Wedding Ring. Use a lightweight paper that will tear away easily after stitching. I use blank newsprint, or paper from "kiddie" sketch pads, or 15lb paper when i can find it. A sturdy tracing paper that will survive the trip through your printer would also work well.

When printing from Acrobat Reader, set page scaling to "none".

Also, click the "Advanced" button and select "Print as Image" to ensure the seam allowances are printed, too.



Fabric key	Number of patches	Yardage estimate	Fabric key	Number of patches	Yardage estimate
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280

5/8

312

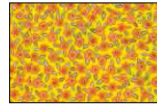
1

280

7/8

248

3/4



311

12 + 1/8

312





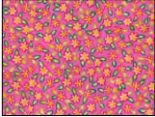
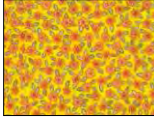

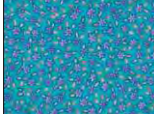
3/4

280

7/8

248

5/8

Fabric key	Number of patches	Yardage estimate	Fabric key	Number of patches	Yardage estimate
	450	$12 + 5/8$		404 #	$1 + 3/4$
	400	$1 + 1/4$		400	$1 + 1/4$
	400	$1 + 1/8$		400	1
	400	1		400	$1 + 1/8$

The estimate for this fabric assumes that long strips ARE pieced.