

Playing With Jacks



I love to play with simple blocks! The asymmetrical 9 patch layout of this easy block gives plenty of opportunity for playing with various layouts!

This little block is known by many Names! Jacks On Six, Double X, Old Maid's Puzzle, Cat's Cradle, and Three And Six just to name a few.

I started this quilt out with the intent to make it bed sized (why do I always think big?!) but it got way laid somehow and sat idle while I worked on other projects. One day I came across them and decided to lay out just as many as there were, and it did come out in an uneven layout which I really like! I think our minds always see things in an even symmetrical way, but it is fun to challenge the brain a bit by NOT having the layout end up even all the way around.

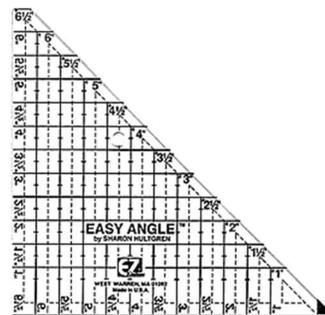
For this same reason I love antique quilts

that end with a row of half blocks because that was the size needed to cover the bed, no more no less :c)

The Jacks On Six block finishes at 6" square. Make as many as you want to make the quilt the size you want it to be, even or uneven layout as you wish! This method cuts all the pieces needed from scrap 2.5" strips.

For each block you will need:

- (1) 2.5" X 11" strip shirting or light print
- (1) 2.5" X 11" strip red (or other dark) print
- (3) 2.5" contrasting squares. Mine were all black or gray, but you can choose your own color scheme!



This is the Easy Angle 6. I use this to cut 1/2 sq triangles from strips without having to add that 7/8" to the finished size! You just add 1/2" to the finished size to cut your strip, and the rest of the math is added in for you on the angled side. Cut matched sets with your strips right sides together and you are ready to just feed the 1/2 sq triangle pairs through your machine. This works GREAT with my scrap strips, because I don't have that 7/8" to worry about. It works with the sizes of strips I have already cut.



For this quilt lay your light print and your dark print strips with right sides together. Use the easy angle ruler to square up one edge, and using the 2.5" mark on the ruler (the unfinished size of the triangle square unit) cut 6 pairs of matched triangles. These six half square triangle squares and the three 2.5" contrasting squares are all you need to finish one 6" block!

If you DON'T have the easy angle ruler you will need to use another method to make your half square triangle squares. The finished size of each half square triangle square is 2". If you are using the traditional cutting method you would cut squares 2 7/8". Cut these squares on the diagonal from corner to corner into half square triangles. There are many other methods for making half square triangles. Use whatever method works for you.



Chain piece your pairs of triangles by feeding them through the machine continuously one after the other without lifting the presser foot or breaking the thread in between the pairs. Press the pairs open with the seam allowance going towards the darker fabric. Clip threads between the squares and trim off any dog ears.

Lay out the pieces for your block! You can see I didn't like the first dark fabric I had laid out, and changed it for this black and white stripe. Yep! I like this one better!



Stitch the block units into rows, and then join the rows to complete the block!

My little quilt center has 30 6" blocks and measures 30" X 36" before borders are added. Because I wanted an old fashioned feel to this quilt, I lapped the borders. First I took several 3.5" strips of black fabrics in random lengths and stitched them end to end so I had more than enough to go around the quilt. I then stitched together several 1.5" strips of red to use as the inner border.

I then stitched the narrow red border to the pieced black border with right sides together. I pressed the seam allowance towards the black. Then I added the border unit to the quilt center in my usual way, adding the side borders first, and then adding the top and bottom borders.

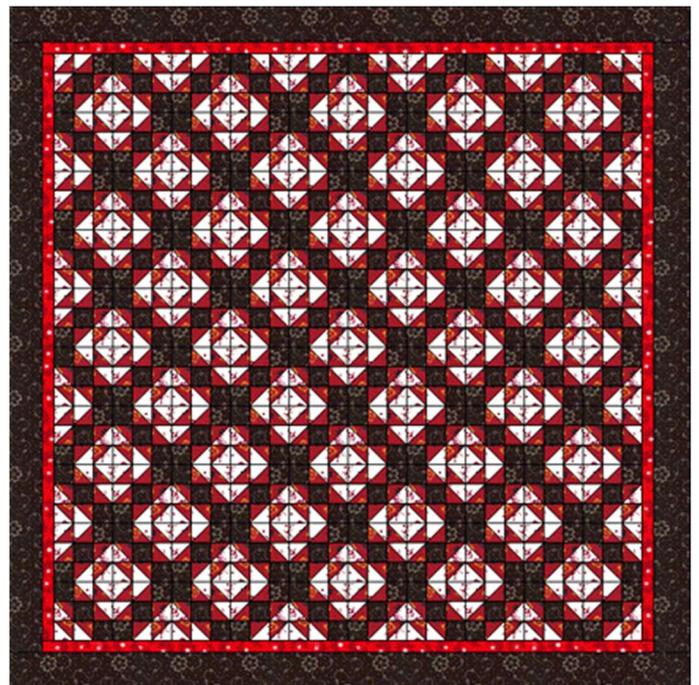
The binding was pieced from more 2.5" red

scrap strips from my 2.5" bin....all sewn together end to end on the diagonal until I had enough to bind the quilt with. I love the look!



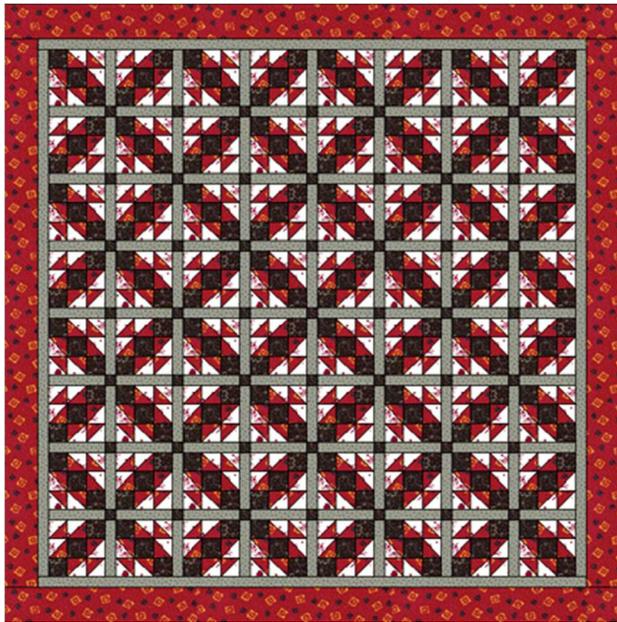
Here is a close up of the quilting detail.

I had fun playing in Electric Quilt with different layouts for this block!

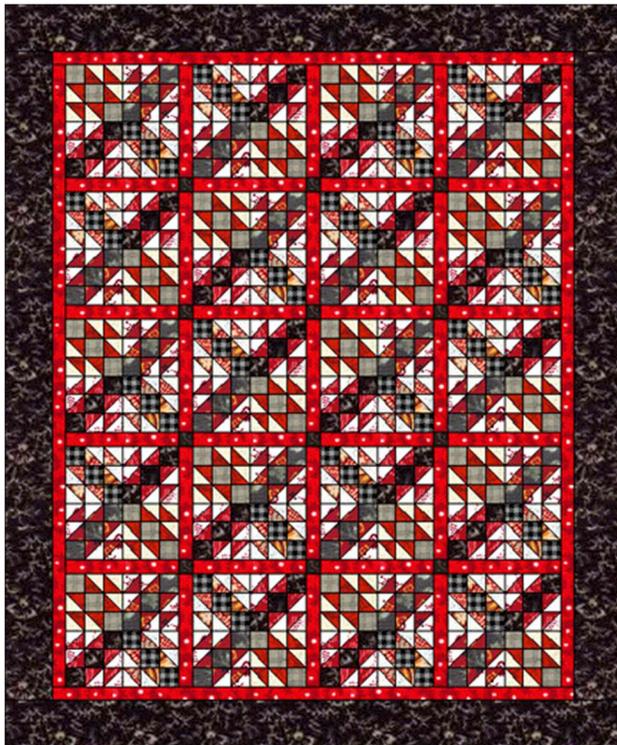


This is the layout I used for the above quilt,

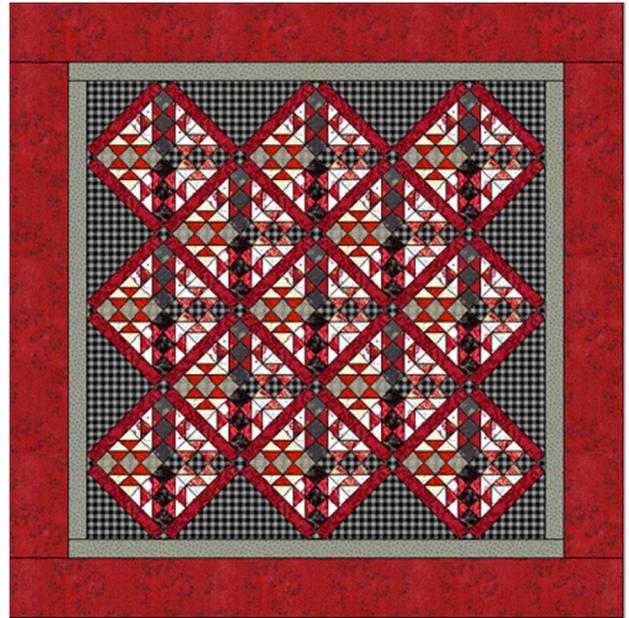
only this one has an even number of blocks up and down so you can see how the pattern resolves.



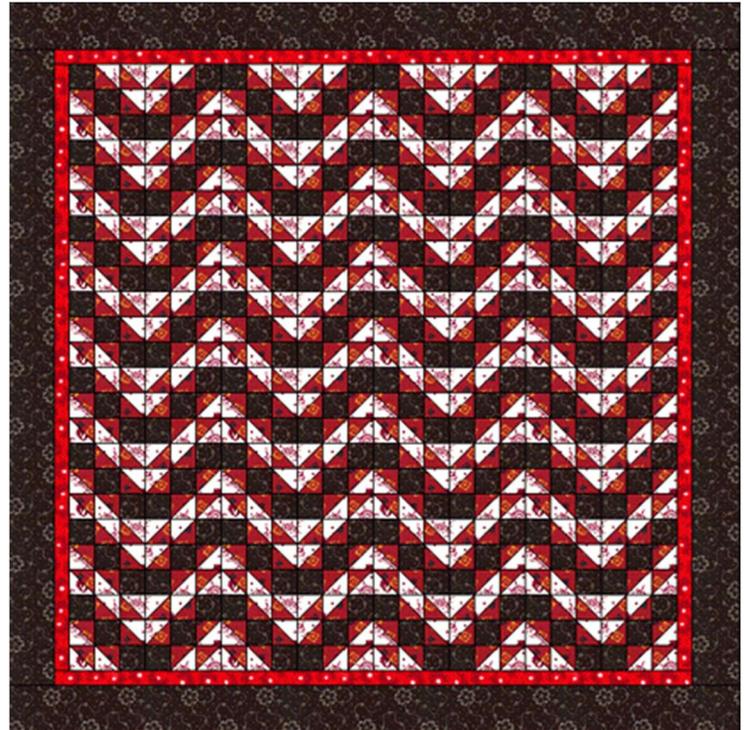
This layout rotates each block as above and they are separated with sashing and cornerstones!



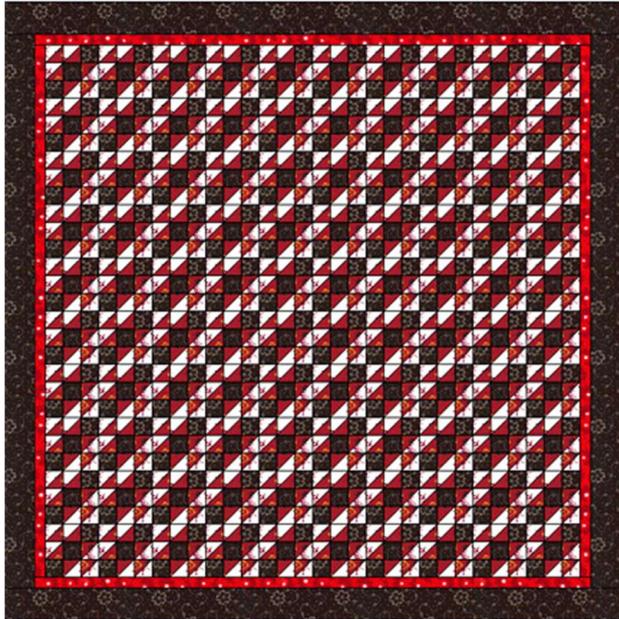
This layout has four blocks rotated to form a star, and the sashing and cornerstones go between each four-block star!



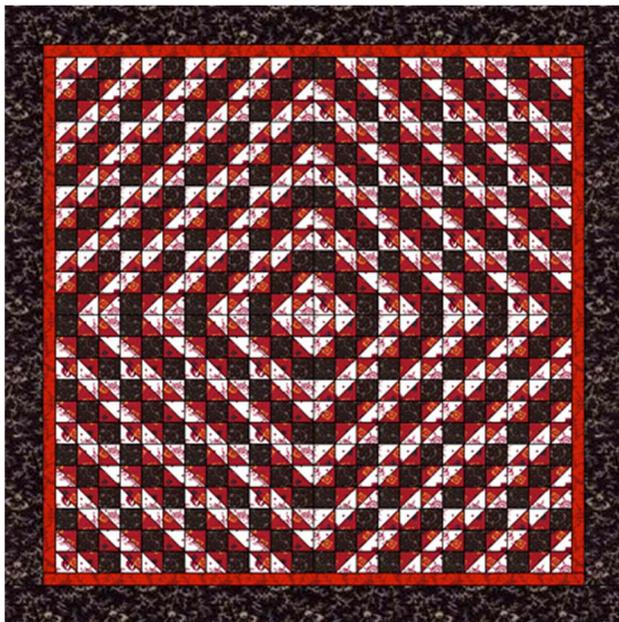
And what if we take the 4-block-star and put it on point?!



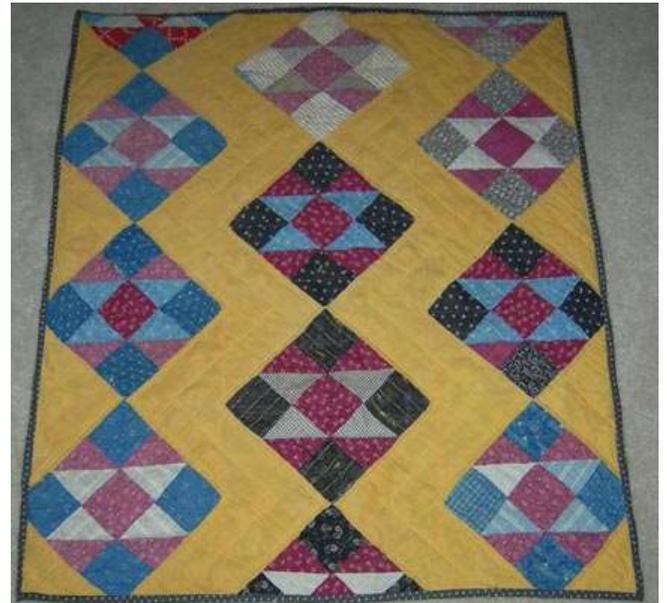
How about something more contemporary?
Block to block in zig zag waves!



In this layout all the blocks are pointed in the same direction in a diagonal across the quilt, otherwise known as straight furrows!



And of course, Barn Raising! Try any log cabin layout or combination for this block.
It's a great scrap user!



My Ebay find! I found this "cutter" piece on Ebay and salvaged it by adding a binding all the way around. I'm using it as a table topper.

I love the indigoes, burgundy resists and mourning gray/blacks in it! And that gold/cheddar zigzag setting..WOW! This block has 4 solid corners instead of 2 half square triangles and 2 solids.

Have fun with your blocks!

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