

Prayer Blanket Ministry Directions for Single Layer Fleece Blankets

Thank you for expressing interest In the Prayer Blanket Ministry. A single layer fleece blanket does require some sewing which is different from the tied fleece blankets we are used to. These are warm and keep out the drafts, but aren't so cumbersome that they are too heavy to carry around (which could be a concern for an elderly person or someone in poor health that would be a target group for the blankets). These sewn borders are also just a bit more tailored than the tied ones.

A fleece blanket should be made from a 5.5-6 ft. piece of fabric. These could be shorter, but by the time you fold the edges over you lose some length and we want our blankets to cover people of a variety of heights. If you have a shorter length it could be used for a youth or just sew the edge very narrow to save length. You will also need thread, pins and a sewing machine with a sturdy needle. The machine should be capable of doing at least a zigzag stitch. It is nice to use a more decorative border, which I encourage, because that makes them look like some time went into them and a bit of love. I use a wave type stitch that doesn't take an excessive amount of thread, but is decorative even for a man's blanket. Fleece does not fray so the edges are a simple fold and there is no need to fold the inside edge under to finish it.

Note: Some fleece patterns can be gender generic and most of those should probably be made in the mitered corner type blanket that will be described below. If it is definitely a feminine print, feel free to loop it as below. Also 2 youth blankets can be made from 2.5 yards of fleece if the pattern can be used sideways. Cut fleece in half for a 45"x50" blanket.

General instructions:

1. Lay out the fleece and cut to square off the top and bottom of the fleece so it doesn't look skewed. Then cut off the selvage on the sides of the fleece to get rid of the edges with white or writing on it. Take note of which side of the fleece has writing that you can read, that is the right side.
2. There are 2 types of borders that we will use. The first is a looped border that goes well on a blanket for a female. The second type is a simple folded over edge with mitered corners. You will have to miter both types, but the second mitered type is more defined than the looped type. We will cut loops out of the corner of the looped type blanket, so it doesn't have to be as precise.
3. The next step is up to you, you can pin a folded edge all around the blanket or you can just use your stitch guide on the sewing machine plate to guide your stitching. I am the second type of stitcher because this is a simple blanket; it doesn't require a lot of fussiness. It is meant to be warm, but still nice looking. If you are cautious, pin. If you have some small expertise at sewing, fold by eyeing it and use the guide.
4. For the looped type blanket, fold the edges at least 3 inches into the wrong side (depending on the length of loops that you like) and pin or just fold as you go. For the generic mitered blanket 1-2 inches will be sufficient. I like to give myself plenty of fold because as you sew, you will want to be able to have your presser foot fully on top of the inside part of the inner fold. It tends to roll and slide a bit, especially along the top and bottom edges which are more stretchy. You will cut off the extra fabric in the end step when the border edges are cleaned up.



5.

This is the trickiest part of the whole blanket, but not that hard. Above you can see the corner folded together with an approximate 45 degree angle as it is held up. This needs to be cut along the bottom side as shown in the second picture, leaving a corner as in the last picture above. This can be cut a bit more to make a more clean corner, **but you need an overlap** so that you can sew into the corner tip. I sew into the tip as part of the running seam, then turn the fabric and sew back along it to the inner corner before continuing the run.

6. If doing the loop edge you are done with the corner for now (a). Just run the seam around the corner into the next side. If a mitered edge, then the stitching will have to go into the corner and back to seal it down with whatever border stitch you are using (b).

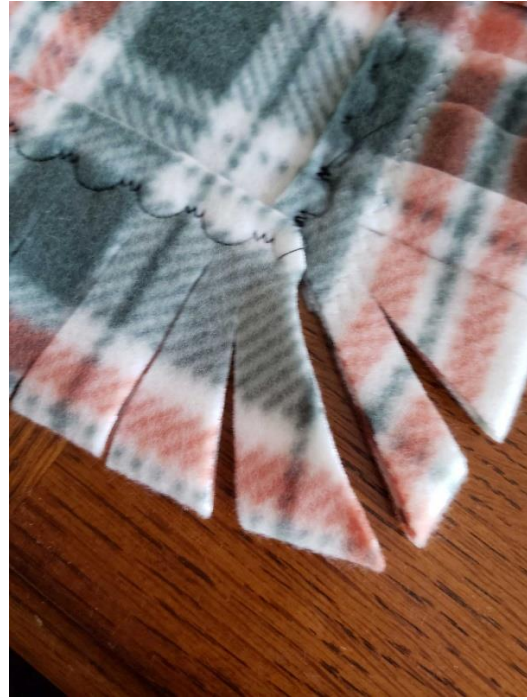


a.



b.

7. This edge stitching continues around all 4 sides. If doing the mitered edge it is finished after the 4 sides are sewn, except for cleaning up the inside border.
8. The looped edge requires some cutting. You can use a rotary cutter if you can be careful and not cut into the stitching. You can also put some lightly sticky tape along the line of stitching to stop you from cutting into it. I use scissors and just take my time going around the edges. (You can go sit in your easy chair and do these last steps as you get to them.)
9. The loops look best if cut in about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch spacing. When you get to the corner it looks best if you do some angles as shown in the next pictures. The first is a wedge cut into the inside corner and the second is another angle cut to round out the corner loops.



10. The first picture directly above is the right-side of the fleece. They look pretty flat but they are loops. The next 2 pictures are of the last step which is to clean up the wrong-side inside edge of the stitching. I just lay my scissors against the stitching and cut. It keeps a safe distance from the stitching and since fleece doesn't fray, that's it.
11. When you get your blanket done, bring it into the church and we will handle them like the prayer shawls. If you want to give one to someone just check one out at the church office to let us have a record of who received it with blessings from St. John.

Note: A prayer shawl can be made in the same way. If you have an extra piece of fleece, at least 30 extra inches wide, you can make a mitered or looped shawl.