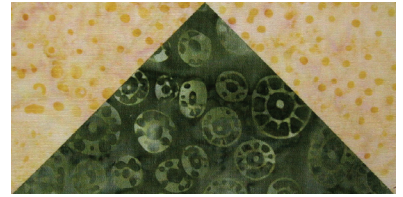


# STRIP-PIECED FLYING GEESE

## Technique: Diagonal Corners, Method 2



There are many ways to piece Flying Geese blocks. When I developed this technique I was only aware of a few of the ways and usually used rectangles and squares, marking a diagonal line on the squares and sewing to the rectangles, then cutting away the excess fabric. Sometime around 2001, I was getting ready to make a queen size quilt that needed 144 of these blocks with the "geese" part made from the same fabric and the "sky" part made from different fabrics. I decided to strip-piece the "sky" to the "geese" before cutting the rectangles and sewing the diagonal corners.

For these sample blocks, they will finish at  $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{4}''$ . That's the size needed for my Sweet Sampler pattern. For a different block size: Cut wider "geese" strips wider width of block unit plus  $\frac{1}{2}''$ . Cut narrower "sky" strips narrower width of block unit plus  $\frac{1}{2}''$ . For example: If the finished block is  $4'' \times 2''$ , cut the "geese" fabric strips  $4\frac{1}{2}''$  wide and cut the "sky" fabric strips  $2\frac{1}{2}''$  wide.

To figure how many strips you need for the blocks divide the length of the strip (40") by the narrower width of the block unit plus  $\frac{1}{2}''$ . That will give you the number of units each strip will make. For example: For the  $4'' \times 2''$  finished size  $40 \div 2.5 = 16$ . So you will need 1 geese strip and 2 sky strips to make 16 blocks.

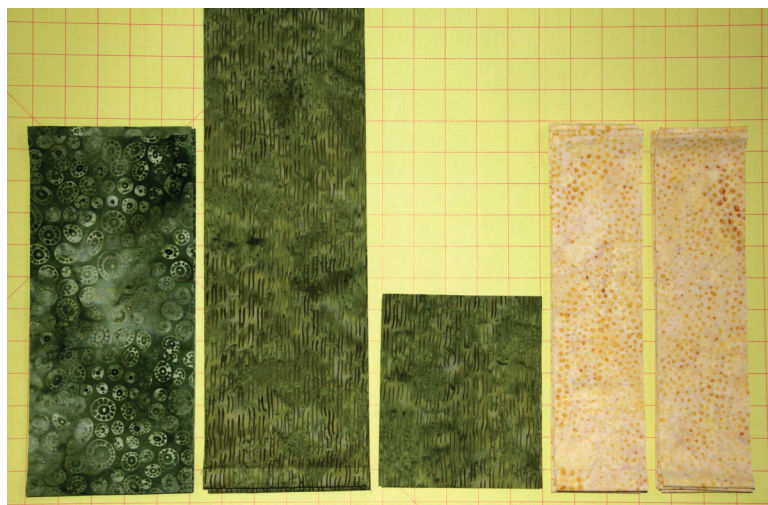
For these sample blocks, I will be making 56 Flying Geese from 2 geese fabrics and 1 sky fabric, for a total of 28 from each geese fabric. The unfinished size will be  $5'' \times 2\frac{3}{4}''$ . My fabric is 44" wide so each strip will make 16 blocks ( $44 \div 2.75 = 16$ ). That will give me extra blocks or extra width for squaring up or miscuts. But one of my geese fabrics is directional and I need to cut it on the lengthwise grain to get the results I want. I only purchased 1 yard of this fabric which will only make 12 blocks per strip. To get the additional blocks I need, I will cut two  $9'' \times 5''$  strips from the directional geese fabric (cutting a little extra will allow for squaring up and miscuts).

### **CUTTING** (Cut strips on the crosswise grain unless otherwise specified.)

From geese fabric 1: Cut 2 strips  $44'' \times 5''$

From directional geese fabric 2: Cut 2 strips  $35'' \times 5''$  and 2 strips  $9'' \times 5''$  on the lengthwise grain

From sky fabric: Cut 8 strips  $44'' \times 2\frac{3}{4}''$



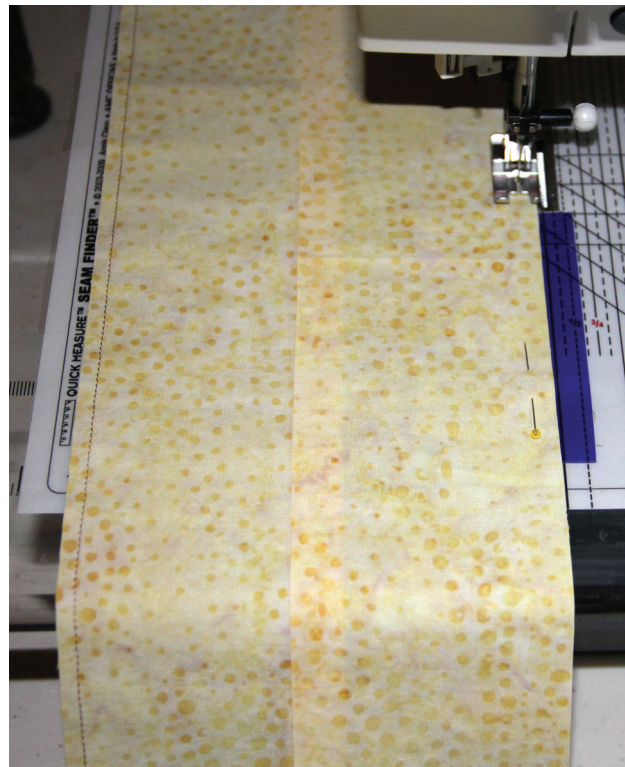
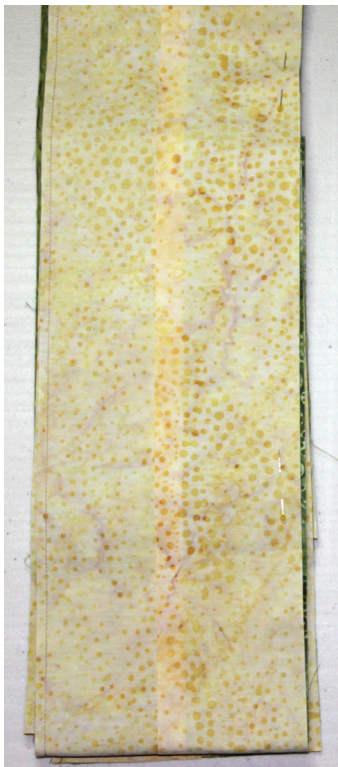
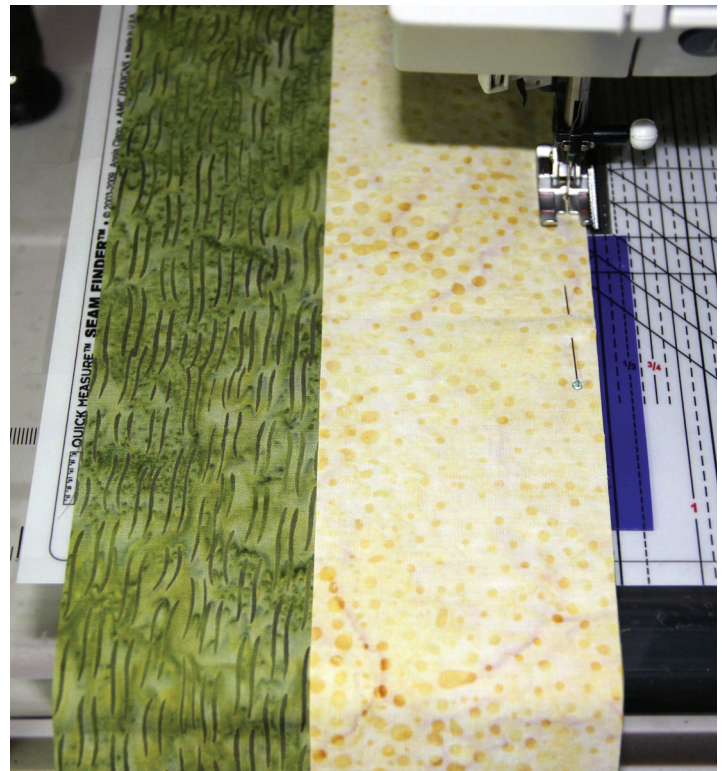
I like to fold my fabric twice when cutting strips so I'm cutting 4 layers at a time. Square up the edges first before double folding the fabrics.

When I cut these strips, I only cut the extra pieces of my directional print  $6'' \times 5''$ . That would have given me the exact number of blocks I needed, except for the fact that I forgot to pay attention when cutting the units and the geese fabric was underneath. One of my units ended up with the geese fabric in 2 pieces, so I ended up short. That's why I say to cut a little extra, so I changed the measurement that I needed to 9".



**STEP 1:** Sew a sky strip to each long side of the geese strips using a very scant  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (approximately  $\frac{3}{16}$ ") seam allowance. This seam will not be in the finished block. It's just to hold the fabrics together for sewing and will make bonus blocks. You need to use a very scant seam since a few stitches will be left when you are finished and you don't want them to be along the seam line which will require pulling them out. For the directional print that was cut in 2 pieces, treat them as 1 unit when sewing.

*Tip: I place a Sewing Edge by Alicia's Attic on the Seam Guide so I won't forget to sew the scant seam allowance. I also pin all of the strips together first before sewing so I can chain sew without taking time to line up the fabrics. I would probably pin both sides at once but am doing them separately in the photos to show the process.*

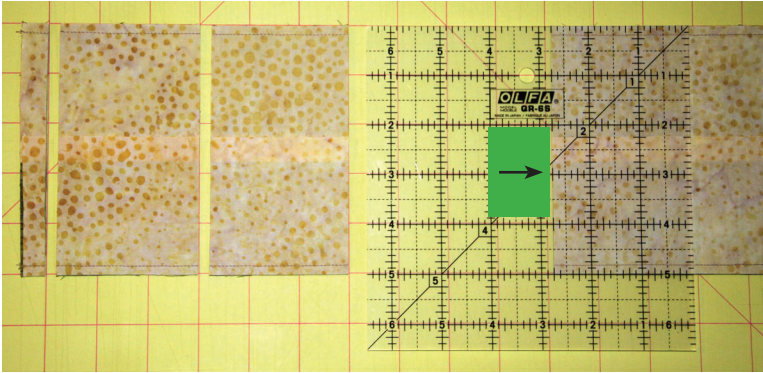


*If you don't have a Sewing Edge, blue Painter's Tape or a few pages from a self-stick notepad will work. Or you could even use one of the Guide Bars that go with the Seam Guide.*

*When cutting the units in Step 2, place a piece of masking tape or a sticky note on the ruler at the location for the width of the unit, with an arrow pointing to the side of the ruler to use. This will help prevent miscuts.*



**STEP 2:** Press seam lines to set seams but do not press open. Cut each sewn strip into 14 units  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " wide (the width of the sky strips). Layer 2 strip sets for faster cutting, matching raw edges at top and bottom.

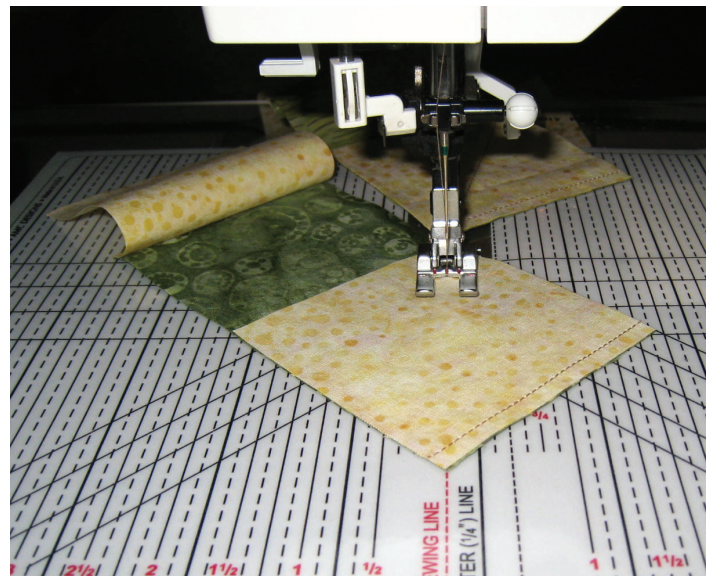
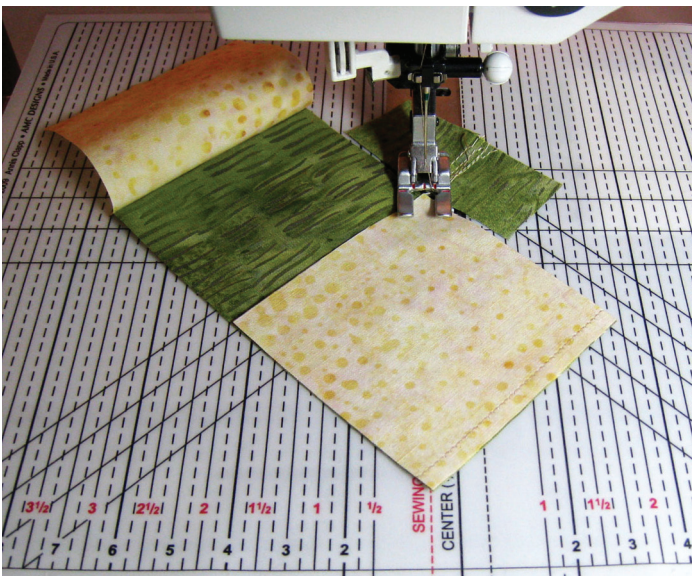


Stack and stagger the units to make it easy to pick them up for chain piecing.

*Tip: When sewing diagonal seams, sewing 1 thread width away from the diagonal line will give more accuracy by allowing for the fold in the fabric when pressing.*

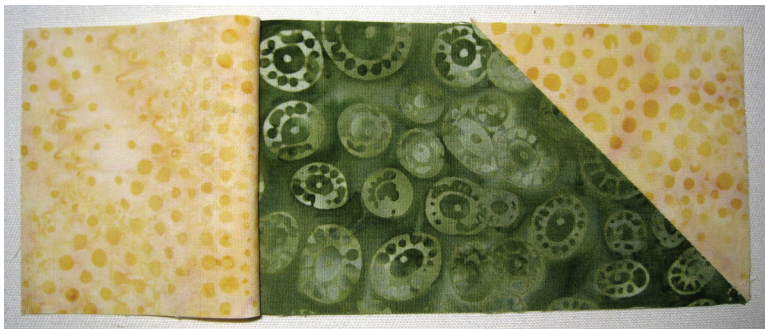
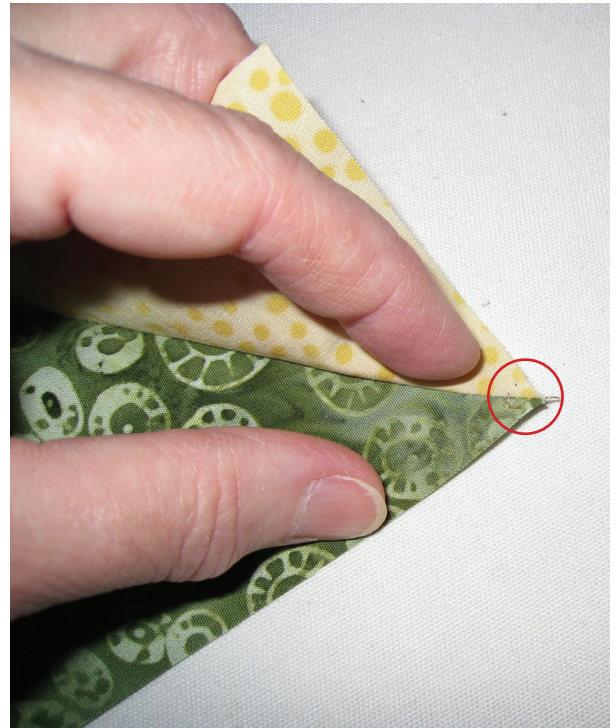
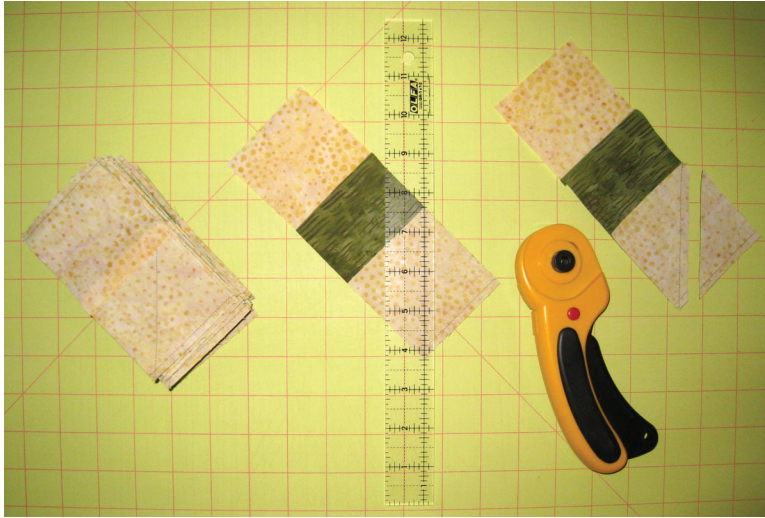
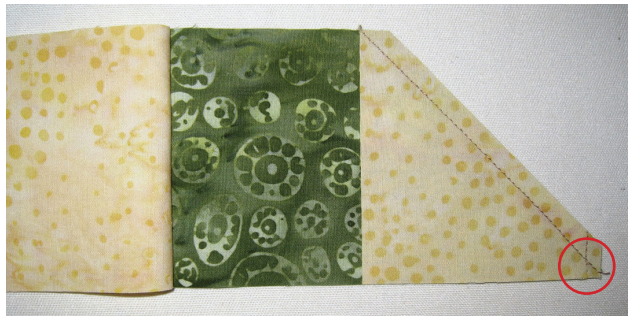
*Note: These instructions are written for use with the Seam Finder™ without marking sewing lines. If you have trouble with your seams bowing, or for more accuracy with larger block sizes, you may prefer to mark your sewing lines.*

**STEP 3:** Using an open toe foot for better vision, and moving the left sky fabric out of the way, line up the inside corner of the right sky fabric with the needle and the outside corner with the red sewing line on the Seam Guide. Keep the outside corner on this line until seam is sewn. Repeat for each unit by chain piecing. Always start and end with a thread saver.

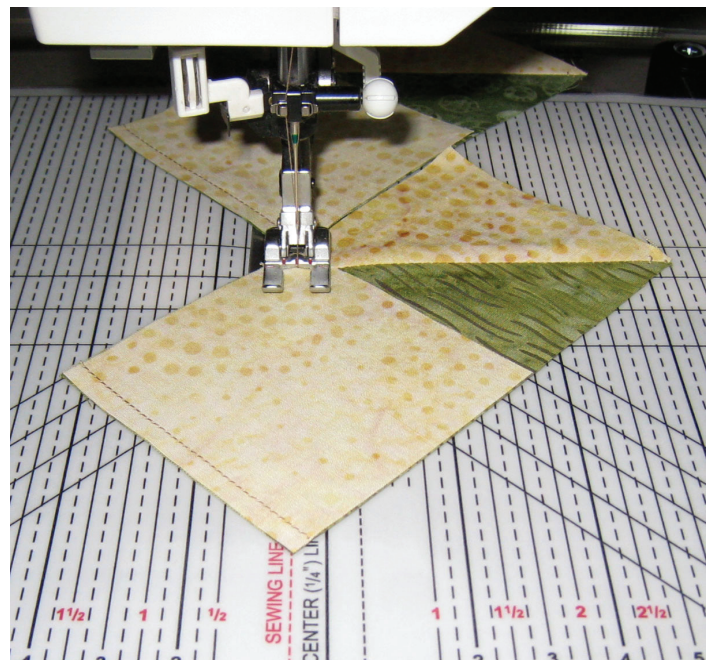




**STEP 4:** Cut away excess fabric leaving a 1/4" seam allowance and press sky fabric toward corner. There will be a couple of stitches at the corner from the first stitching that will need to be pulled loose before pressing (noted by red circle).

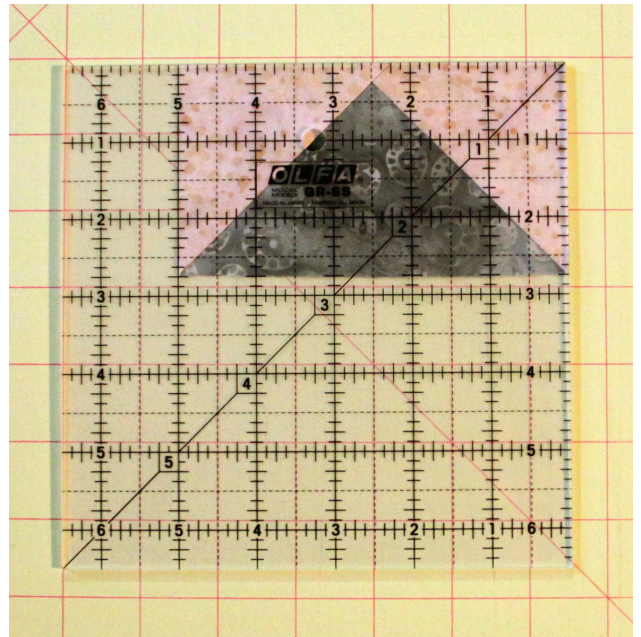
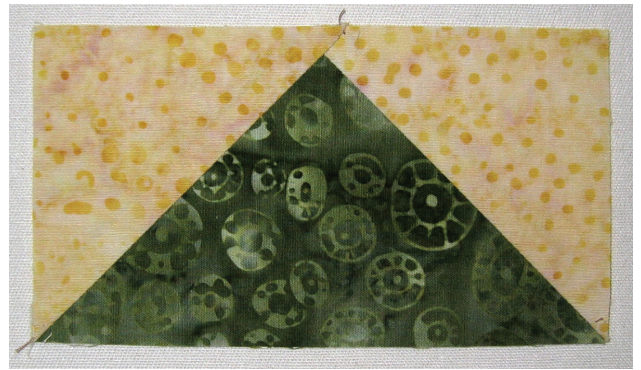
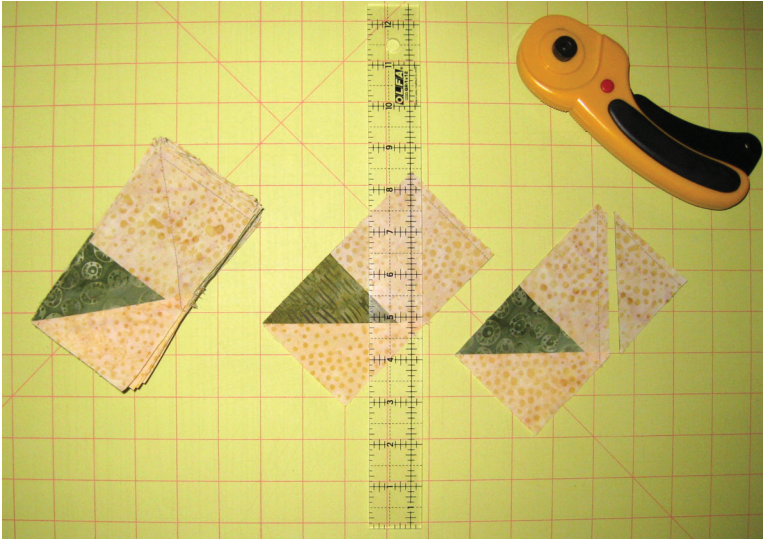


**STEP 5:** Repeat Steps 3 and 4 for opposite side, sewing from inside corner to outside corner. This will keep the outside corner from being pulled into the feed dogs as you sew.



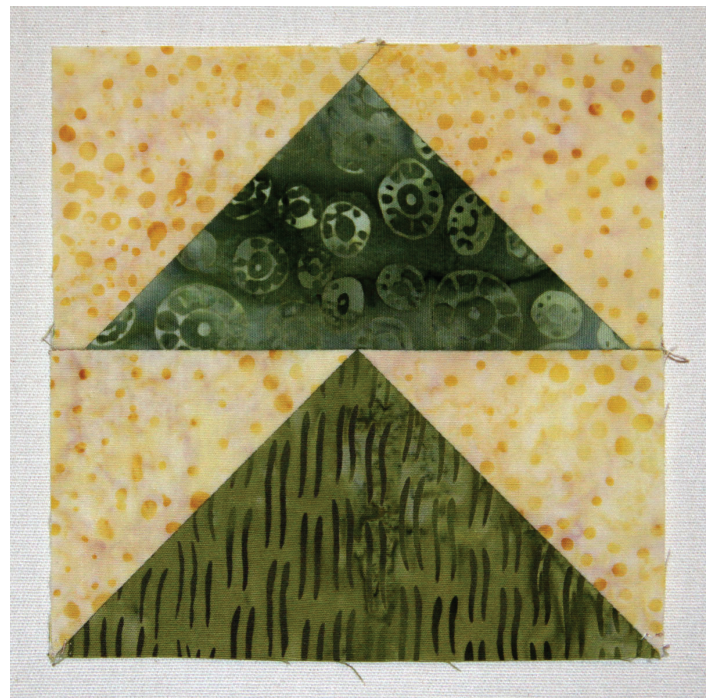
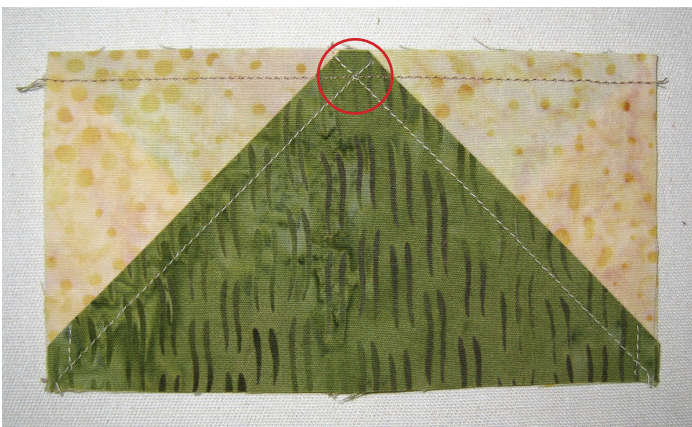


Trim and press seams. Don't forget to pull the stitches loose at corners so they will press correctly. The blocks should now be 5" x 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>". If your stitching isn't perfect they may be slightly off. If they are oversized, square them to the correct size. If they are undersized just allow for a scant seam allowance when sewing to other blocks.



*Tip: When I trim the excess fabric I place the 1/4" line of the ruler to the left of the seam line for a scant 1/4" seam. This will add a little to the bonus blocks to make them as large as possible.*

To get accurate points when sewing 2 block units together, sew across the center of the X formed on wrong side by previous seams. Press in the direction that gives the least bulk. I chose to press toward the top unit. Sometimes it's better to press the seam open or press to the bottom unit so you can see the diagonal seam lines on the sides for more accurate assembly.

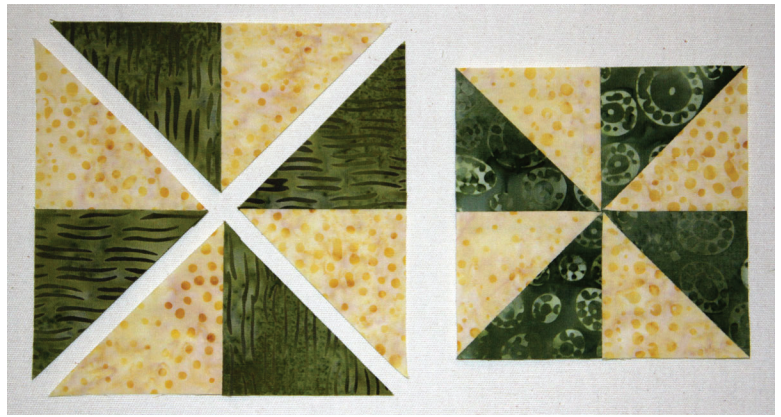
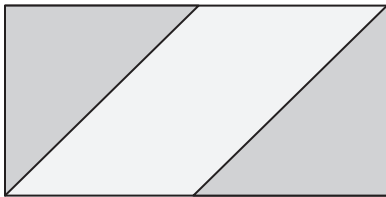
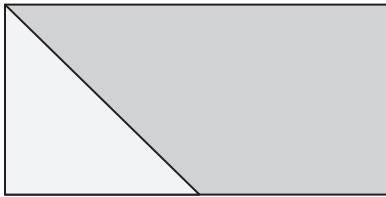




The bonus blocks can be sewn together to make hourglass or pinwheel blocks, or put them in a goody bag for your next quilt guild auction. Sometimes I use them in pieced borders or elsewhere in the quilt if they are large enough. Use a very scant seam allowance and square to closest even measurement. They will make right hand and left hand blocks. For this block size, the pinwheel blocks are 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" unfinished, and the hourglass blocks are 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" unfinished.

*TIP: If you are using directional prints for either the geese or the sky or both and want the design to go in a particular direction, pay attention when cutting and sewing the strips. Just fold the sky corner at a 45° angle to see which way it will go before sewing the strips together and before sewing the diagonal corners. If you're chain piecing using more than 1 sky fabric, and want the sky fabric to be the same on both corners, pay attention when sewing the second side. If you pin both sides together first you will be sure to get it right.*

This technique will work for other block units also, as long as the corner triangle is the same width as one side of the block. Here are a few samples.



There will be bias edges on the hourglass blocks. This won't matter since you will be squaring them up. Just be careful when sewing the finished blocks together.

## SAMPLE BLOCKS

