

Inset Circles Class

You need 6 ½" square background fabric, 6 ½" square coordinating fabric for the circle, sewing machine with zipper foot, iron, freezer paper, starch, glue (Ex. Aileene's Tacky or Elmer's School Glue liquid or stick, washable, non-toxic glue stick), paper scissors and fabric scissors, pencil, ruler, and something to mark a circle (pot lids, plates, glasses, etc.)

Step 1: Prepare a freezer paper square the size of your background. Layer two pieces, one on top of the other both with glossy side down on ironing surface. You will be pressing the 2 together to make a sturdier template. Iron. Measure to find the center of each side, draw vertical and horizontal centering lines that will find the center of the square. Draw the circle in the center (measure from both sides and top/bottom to center). Make sure there is at least 1" between the edge of the circle and the edge of the square.

Step 2: Carefully cut the circle out of the paper. This is your template.

Step 3: Iron the freezer paper to the wrong side of the background fabric.

Step 4: Cut a smaller circle out of the center, about ½" from freezer paper edge.

Step 5: Snip the fabric around the perimeter to just before freezer paper (about 1/8" away from the freezer paper) about every ¼ - ½" to make 'tabs'. For tighter curves, snips may be needed closer together; for very smooth curves they could be farther apart.

*Step 6 **spray starch method:*** Using spray starch, spray some in a small container (i.e. cap of spray starch can). Using a small brush or Q-Tip, put starch on the circle fabric next to the freezer paper. Pull the tabs taut over onto the freezer paper, pressing with an iron as you go, drying out the starch. Press sufficiently well with enough starch to have this hold its shape. Lightly dab Aileene's Tacky/Elmer's school glue (or glue stick) on the frame's fabric tabs.

*Step 6 **glue method:*** Instead of using spray starch, use the fabric glue stick to glue the fabric tabs to the paper. Pull them taut (press?). Lightly dab Aileene's Tacky/Elmer's school glue (or glue stick) on the frame's fabric tabs. This method caused me difficulty because the tabs stuck too well to the freezer paper. When removing freezer paper (step 10) it was on too firmly to the frame and when dislodging the freezer paper caused the other parts to come undone (the tabs that were supposed to stick to circle fabric).

Step 7: Cut a square of the coordinating fabric larger than the circle. (For class, you were asked to bring a full 6 ½" square. When comfortable with

this method, you may be able to just cut a circle about 1" larger than the circle opening in the background.) I use the background as a frame to choose a special motif if desired. In this instance, you might want to make a few removable marks on the motif to help judge where to cut it.

Step 8: Lay the fabric square with glue on the tabs centered over the circle fabric. Or use the frame to align a chosen motif.

Step 9: Leave to dry slightly – iron if you wish to dry quicker. Iron to help set the crease along the edge of the freezer paper – this is the line you will sew on.

*Step 10 **spray starch method**:* Pull the freezer paper off the background fabric – loosen freezer paper then carefully remove it by running finger around through circle opening.

*Step 10 **glue method**:* Carefully pull the glued tabs off the freezer paper. Make sure to support both sides of the project so you don't distort the fabric or pull the tabs off the circle fabric. This step is only if you used glue, not the spray starch. Pull the freezer paper off the background fabric.

Step 11: Attach the zipper foot to your sewing machine. Set the piece under the foot so the circle fabric is on the bottom. Manipulate the frame fabric to expose the crease. Sew on crease using the zipper foot so needle is right on this line.

Step 12: Trim the circle fabric with its attached tabs to about 1/4".

Step 13: Press both sides. (Note: If you want the circle to be truly inset, press tabs outward. If you want the circle to be raised, press the seam into the circle.)

Reference material:

This is the method described in this document (unfortunately I found it AFTER I wrote this up and did all of my experiments.

[Piec-lique Circles & Drunkard's Path: Tutorial - Purple Daisies Quilting](#)

And this one very similar to the one above:

[Inset Circles \(quiltfabrication.com\)](#)

Dale Fleming on HGTV – some variations on this technique

[How to Create Easy Circle Quilt Blocks Video | HGTV](#)