

Welcome to our Lent Knitalong!

Victoria Methodist Church in Bristol are hosting their third Lent Knitalong and are excited to be joined this year by knitters all around the UK (and some further afield!)

Participants will receive weekly emails split into daily segments, each containing a daily reflection and a couple of rows of knitting pattern (or knitting 'clues').

The exact design of the knitting pattern is a surprise, but knitters will create a cushion cover which can be sewn up on Easter day.

The daily reflections and meditations have very kindly been written by Ministers, local preachers and worship leaders in the Bristol area and beyond.

Schedule:

Reflections and knitting clues for the first week of Lent (Weds 2nd - Sat 5th March) will be emailed out on Monday 28th February.

Thereafter, you will receive emails each Friday during Lent for the following Sunday - Saturday (apart from the final week, which will also include Easter day).

Knitting Skills:

This should be achievable by near-beginners! You will need to be able to cast on and off, knit and purl, and there is an option to slip stitches occasionally, but this will be explained (or regular knit stitches can be substituted if you aren't confident!).

There are very good YouTube videos explaining/demonstrating all of the above techniques if you need a helping hand, or buddy up with a more experienced knitter if you can find one!

Materials needed:

You will need yarn, knitting needles, a cushion pad and a sewing needle for sewing up the seams at the end.

Two stitch markers are optional but will probably be helpful with the counting! These needn't be fancy—a couple of tiny rubber bands, e.g., loom bands, or small loops of scrap yarn, will do the job just as nicely as shop-bought ones.

Yarn choice:

This project (and the swatch below) uses DK weight yarn. I'd recommend using a light colour, either plain or slightly tonal; anything more variegated than that will obscure the pattern when it is finished. As a rough guide, you will need about 250 g of yarn (or 525 metres) but to be safe it might be good to get a bit more than that! This is probably very generous—you might only use 400 metres, for example, as DK yarn can vary in weight, but I would hate for anyone to run out of yarn before the end!

Needles:

You'll need a pair of straight knitting needles (not too short—ideally 30 cm in length, or thereabouts; you will be working with 185 stitches on the needles, but only a maximum of four rows per day, and usually only two rows). Alternatively, you could use a circular needle with a fairly long cable, if preferred (but you will be knitting back and forth, not in the round, as the cushion cover is to be knitted flat).

Use whichever needle size you'd normally work with when knitting DK, or possibly go down one size, as the fabric will want to be a little tighter/firmer than normal so it can stretch over a cushion without gaping too much. If you're not sure which needle size to use, try the swatch below on 3.75mm needles (or 4mm if you're a tight knitter, or go down to 3.5mm if you tend to knit at a loose gauge) and then adjust if necessary, following the guidance underneath the pattern.

Cushion pad:

You might like to buy this in advance, or during Lent, so that you can sew up the cushion on Easter morning. You'll need a cushion pad that measures 45 cm square. These are widely available online if your local yarn/craft shop doesn't stock them, and they often come in packs of two or four, so if you're doing this knitalong with a friend you can share a pack!

Swatch pattern:

The swatch below isn't necessary for the project, but will be useful in checking that your gauge is roughly right:

Cast on 23 stitches, not too tightly.

Row 1: (K1, P1) - repeat to last stitch, K1.

Row 2: as row 1.

Row 3: as row 1.

Row 4: as row 1.

Row 5: as row 1.

Row 6: K1, P1, K1, P1, K15, P1, K1, P1, K1.

Row 7: K1, P1, K1, P17, K1, P1, K1.

Row 8: K1, P1, K1, P1, K6, P3, K6, P1, K1, P1, K1.

Row 9: as row 7.

Row 10: as row 8.

Row 11: as row 7.

Row 12: as row 8.

Row 13: as row 7.

Row 14: as row 8.

Row 15: as row 7.

Row 16: as row 8.

Row 17: as row 7.

Row 18: as row 8.

Row 19: as row 7.

Row 20: K1, P1, K1, P1, K2, P11, K2, P1, K1, P1, K1.

Row 21: as row 7.

Row 22: as row 20.

Row 23: as row 7.

Row 24: as row 8.

Row 25: as row 7.

Row 26: as row 8.

Row 27: as row 7.

Row 28: as row 6.

Row 29: as row 1.

Row 30: as row 1.

Row 31: as row 1.

Row 32: as row 1.

Cast off all stitches, using a stretchy method.

Wet block the swatch (if you haven't done this before, there are plenty of YouTube videos demonstrating this) and pin out on a towel/blocking mat.

After the swatch dries and relaxes it should measure between 10 and 11 cm square. If your swatch is bigger than this, you could try using a smaller needle size; if your swatch is too small, try going up a needle size or two.

Getting the correct gauge is not too crucial for this project, as it's going to be a cushion cover, and will cope with being stretched a little if necessary, but your swatch will give you a guide that you're on the right track, and also the opportunity to practise knitting, purling and casting on and off if you're new to knitting!

A final word on the patterns/reflections: there are no copyright issues, so do feel free to share these with anyone who might like to join in. Some knitters may prefer to print the patterns and reflections out for ease of reading/keeping track.

Any issues/further queries, contact Lyn Lloyd-Jones at ljcomposition@googlemail.com