

## Tactile Bird Block – Instructions

*A few helpful tips to get started:*

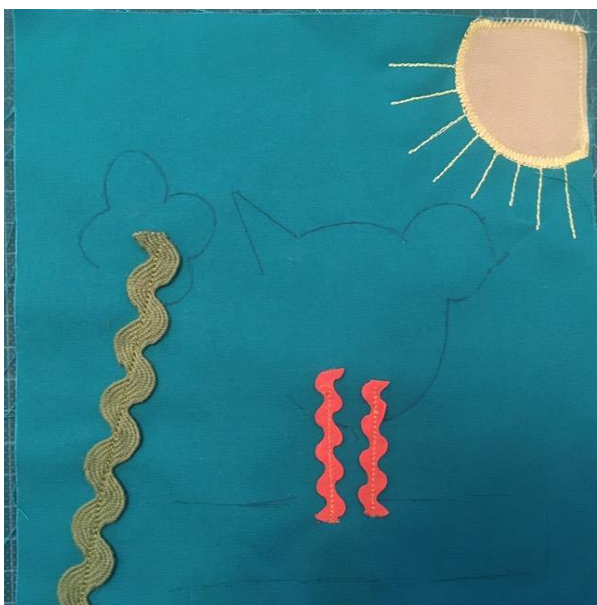
*Choose a firm background fabric, then nice bright colours with gentle patterns as very “busy” patterns are confusing to people living with dementia. Large areas of dark colours are not good, especially dark blue. Try to get lots of different textures in your fabric, corduroy, silky, rough.*

*Everything needs to be sewn on **VERY** securely so that bits cannot be pulled off.*

*When you use a bonding material **ALWAYS** iron onto your fabric between a layer of baking parchment or something similar. If the sticky part gets on the ironing board or the iron it is very hard to remove. **ALWAYS** ask an adult to help you use the iron.*



1. Start with an 8” square of moderately firm fabric for the background.
2. Choose fabric for the bird (if there is a visible grain, or line as in corduroy, use the lines to make the bird livelier), ricrac or tape for legs, a zip for a branch, something silky for a sun, the softer part of velcro for flowers - use your imagination and find things which look and feel interesting and different. Try to match your thread colour to your fabric.
3. Choose fabric for the bird and iron a bonding medium on the back, then cut out a larger circle for the body, a smaller one for the head, (trace around a cup and a cotton reel, or whatever you can find that is the right size) and a matching triangular piece for the tail, and a contrasting piece for the beak. Just cut these out by eye, a slightly irregular shape gives the birds more personality!
4. **Following the instructions for your chosen bonding material** and place on fabric, tucking the tail under the body, the beak under the head, which then goes over the body, you can pin the larger



pieces in the middle to hold them in place but **DO NOT iron in place yet!** Draw around the pieces with an erasable pen so you can place the pieces accurately as you sew the first pieces in place. **See picture 2**

5. Lay out your “picture”, legs for the bird, a branch, a flower and something in the sky – I made a sun but it could have been an insect, or aeroplane? Shuffle things around until they look pleasing with nothing too near the edges, unless they are meant to, like the sun, or you could have grass covering the bottom edge.

6. Choose ricrac or something similar for the legs, cut for leg length + add enough to tuck under the body, and under the branch below. Sew in place **FIRMLY**, with 2 rows of straight or zigzag stitch. You do not need to **backstitch** as

the ends will be covered by the next bit of sewing (this applies to all pieces which will be covered but make sure you start and end **UNDER** the piece which will go on top.

7. Place the bird's tail and beak as in picture 2, remove the backing paper and iron in place using backing parchment to protect your iron. Then sew around the edges starting and finishing where the body and head will overlap.
8. Continue with the body in the same way as the tail and beak, starting your sewing where the head will overlap, add the head last. Bring threads to the back of the block and tie the ends. Add an eye, either using a button, sewn very firmly with strong cotton, or a circle of black fabric, bonded and zigzagged.
9. Add a colourful branch below, this could be a short zip (just sew firmly in place) or a strip of very textured fabric (use bonding material as before, and then zigzag all raw edges, there might be an interesting selvedge you could use, this could be straight stitched), or wider ricrac – see what you have which looks nice with your colours and provides a different texture.



10. Now add a flower, leaf or insect above the bird in the same way to complete and balance your block. Think about layers, e.g. an insect with wings, sew wings first then body over the top, I used a metallic shiny fabric for these wings.

11. You can add details with machine or hand embroidery, such as insect antennae or rays of the sun, or nice rows of machine embroidery.

Your block is now complete!

### Finishing techniques

If your block is going to be part of a group quilt, you do not need to do anything further, just talk to your group leader.

Alternatively, you could “bag” it out by putting a backing fabric on top, right sides together, sewing around all 4 sides but leave a gap of a couple of inches on one side, trim the excess seam on the corners, turn it the right way out through the gap, poke the corners out carefully with something like the end of a little paint brush, press and slip stitch the gap by hand.



Judy Harris FFQs, October 2019

Left: A similar block made with a corduroy bird and an insect with metallic wings! This block has been “bagged”