

# REYNOLDA

## Sew a Bird Ornament

### Project

Create a small, hand-sewn bird ornament. Practice spatial skills and hand-eye coordination while also thinking about different types of birds.

### Samples



### Inspiration

At Reynolda, there are several works of art featuring birds. Explore the links below and see what kind of birds you find. While looking at the works of art, consider:

- How many birds do you see? What kind of bird or birds did the artist create?
- What colors is the bird's body?
- Does the bird have any special markings?
- What shape is the bird's head?
- How did the artist make this artwork?

John James Audubon, [Blue Jay](#), 1830 and [Bachman's Warbler](#), 1833

Martin Johnson Heade, [Orchid with Two Hummingbirds](#), 1871

Charles Burchfield, [The Woodpecker](#), 1955-63

Audrey Flack, [Bounty](#), 1978

### Vocabulary

**Running stitch:** a simple stitch of short, straight lines. To make this stitch, the needle pierces through the fabric, back and forth, making a short stitch on alternating sides of the fabric each time. See [Stitches for Sewing](#) for visual instructions for this stitch.

**Whip stitch:** a simple stitch for sewing pieces of fabric together. To whip stitch, bring the needle and thread up through both pieces of fabric, wrap over the edge, and bring the needle up again through the fabric. See [Stitches for Sewing](#) for visual instructions for this stitch.

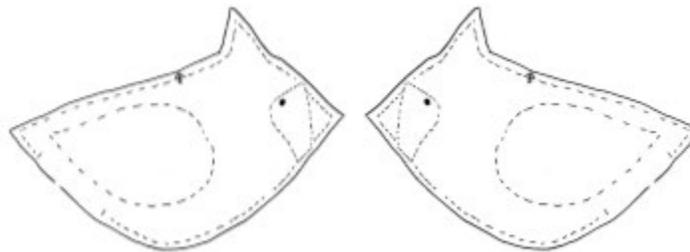
## Materials

- Needle
- Scissors that will cut fabric and thread
- Printed templates of a [Scarlet Tanager/Songbird](#) or [Cardinal/Blue jay](#) (**or**, if you don't have access to a printer, draw your own based on these examples)
- Felt sheets **or** other fabric, at least two 4 x 6 inch pieces (plus straight pins or safety pins)
- Embroidery floss **or** thread
- Polyester fiberfill **or** fabric scraps cut into thin strips (about 1/4" or 1/8" wide)
- *Optional:* Two small seed beads with a hole just large enough to fit your needle and thread through. These are for the eyes, but you can also use thread to stitch eyes.
- *Optional:* A piece of ribbon about 4-5 inches long to hang the ornament. If you don't have ribbon, sew a loop of embroidery floss or thread to hang your bird.

## Process

For video instructions, find this episode on [Reynolda's YouTube page](#).

1. Print out or draw the bird template you wish to use.
2. **If you are using felt for your fabric**, cut two rectangles 4 inches by 6 inches and place one on top of the other. Place the bird body pattern on top, getting the edge of the pattern as close to the edge of your rectangle as possible so you can use the scraps for another project. For your wings, use the same or a different color felt and cut two wing shapes, using the pattern. If you are making the cardinal or blue jay, cut two pieces of the face mask out of black felt.
3. **If you are using other fabric for your bird**, find the "right side" of the fabric (the one with the pattern or stronger color; the side you want to see). Fold a rectangle of fabric (at least 8 inches by 6 inches) in half with the "right sides" facing each other. Place the bird body pattern on top, getting the edge of the pattern as close to the edge of your fabric as possible so you can use the scraps for another project. For your wings, use the same or a different color fabric, again folded with the right sides together; cut two wing shapes, using the pattern. If you are making the cardinal or blue jay, cut two pieces of the face mask out of a different fabric.
4. Cut a length of embroidery floss or thread to match or coordinate with the wing color. Thread your needle and knot one end.
5. Place one wing on one body piece as the pattern shows. Bringing the thread up and down through both fabrics, sew the wing to the body. Flip the second body piece over. Flip the second wing piece over and lay it on the body to make a mirror image of the pattern, like this:



6. Follow pattern for the suggested placement of the wings and face mask. Remember to also flip the mask over when sewing it on the back side, just like in the picture above.
7. If you have small beads for the eyes, sew them on to each side of the bird, following the suggested placement in the pattern. Send thread through bead and fabric several times. If you do not have small beads, sew 3-5 short lines right beside each other where the eyes should be.

Like this:



8. If you have some, cut a piece of ribbon 4-5" to hang the ornament. Fold in half. Sew both ends of the ribbon behind the front body piece. You can also use thread or embroidery floss later to create a loop to hang the bird.

**Sew body pieces together:**

9. Place bird bodies together so that all edges meet up and the wings are on the outside. If you are using regular fabric, pin the pieces together with a few straight pins or safety pins.
10. Look at the "START" mark on the pattern. Begin sewing your bird at this point, continuing all the way around the body until you reach the area where the pattern says "STOP." You can either use a **running stitch** or a **whip stitch**, depending on what you prefer. When you reach the area where the pattern says "STOP," leave your needle and thread connected to the bird. Stuff the bird with fiberfill through the small opening where you have not yet sewn. After you have stuffed the bird, finish sewing the rest of the body together. **Note:** If you do not have fiberfill or wool stuffing, cut thin ribbons of fabric and use them to stuff the bird.

### Learn more about birds

- If you are interested in learning more about birds, the Audubon Society has a webpage for kids here: <https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/activities/audubon-for-kids>
- They also share John James Audubon's prints, so you can find more if you like the two in Reynolda's collection. <https://www.audubon.org/birds-of-america>
- If you chose to make a cardinal, blue jay, or scarlet tanager (or other bird), find out more about the bird, including what its song sounds like, with the North American bird guide available on the Audubon Society webpage. <https://www.audubon.org/bird-guide>

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