



A PATCHWORK OF PROGRESS

By Mindy Raye Friedman

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Several young women sit in a living room on a Sunday evening, talking about the gospel, as they are all wrapped up in patchwork quilts. The scene doesn't seem so unusual until you know it's the middle of summer in Utah, and it's very warm outside.

One of the young women comments on the situation. "It's not that the house is cold or anything," she says. "We're all wrapped up in our blankets because it's just comforting."

It's comforting because these quilts have become a big part of their lives. Each young woman earned the squares on her quilt and stitched the final product together. The quilts have a very special meaning because of the growth each young woman went through as she collected squares for a year and sewed her quilt together.

From Pizza Box to Patchwork Pile

When the leaders of the ward introduced the quilt project, they gave each young woman an unused pizza box with two quilt squares inside. Some of the young women were confused and not sure if they would ever have enough squares to make a quilt.

"When I got the two squares in a box, I thought, 'How am I supposed to make a quilt out of two squares?'" says Maren M., 16.



These young women learned that their lives are a lot like a patchwork quilt—they are pieced together one square at a time.



But over the next year, the young women gained more squares. They earned a square for each Young Women lesson they attended and for special occasions like holidays, camp, and New Beginnings. They got squares for finishing Personal Progress value experiences and for reading the Book of Mormon. On her birthday, each young woman was given a large block with a picture of her favorite temple.

“When our leaders explained the whole project to me, I did not want to sew a quilt, so I was just going to put it off,” says Katie W., 13. “Then I started getting the quilt squares every week, and I was so excited because they were so cute. Then it built up into this huge pile.”

“Two quilt squares at a time didn’t seem like anything,” says Abby M., 14. “They were just two little squares of fabric, and I didn’t think much of it. But slowly as I’d take them home from church and put them in my box, the pile just grew and grew and became a stack. Then before long, it was already time to sew them together.”

The First Stitch

Most of the young women in the ward had never used a sewing machine before and had no idea how to sew a quilt. So each young woman received help from a mother, grandmother, or Relief Society sister.

“I got to go up to Idaho and work with my grandma on it,” says Mikayla S., 14. “I don’t get to see or talk to her very often, so it was really nice to go up and work on something with her. I also learned that I like to sew.”

Mikayla wasn’t the only one who found a new talent in sewing. “I didn’t know how good I’d be at sewing, but I knew my grandma would be there to help me,” Abby says. “It actually just came naturally. It was a cool skill that I figured out I could do, and it was fun.”

Since making their quilts, some of the young women have even used their sewing skills for other projects. Maren made pillows for the young women she was in charge of at camp. Katie made headbands as Christmas gifts for her friends at school.



SPIRITUAL POWER

“True spiritual power lies in numerous smaller acts woven together in a fabric of spiritual fortification that protects and shields from all evil.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be Strong in the Lord,” *Ensign*, July 2004, 8.

in the end it builds up a big, beautiful blanket—or a big, beautiful testimony.”

Abby agrees with that. “My quilt is like my testimony,” she says. “It’s like the quilt squares are all the little parts that come together and make me all of the things that I value in life, all the things that I treasure.”

Centered around the Temple

All of the young women treasure their quilts and the experiences that led them to finish the quilts. It’s a reminder of what they have accomplished.

“My favorite square would probably be the Book of Mormon challenge because that was the first time I read the Book of Mormon all the way through,” Mikayla says.

Like Mikayla, each of the young women can point to her favorite squares and remember the experiences that go along with them. Those experiences will help the young women as they look to the future.

“I sleep with my quilt every night,” Katie says. “Every night before I go to bed, I look at the temple, and it reminds me that that’s where I need to end up.”



More Than Just a Quilt

In addition to learning how to sew, the young women learned other lessons.

“I learned patience, because I’m not very good at sewing, and I had to be patient with myself and my imperfections,” says Amanda W., 16.

Madison S., 15, learned how to be humble and ask for help with her quilt. “That happens a lot in our lives,” she says. “We don’t know how to do everything we want to do, and we have to ask Heavenly Father and our leaders and those who have gone before us how they did it and how we can then do it. It’s really helpful to me.”

During the project, the young women also had the opportunity to strengthen their testimonies through the experiences that the squares represented.

“It’s the squares on the quilt that represent my testimony,” Katie says. “That’s how it is in my life. You can’t just expect a testimony to come all at once. You have to wait; you have to get it one piece at a time. It comes slowly, but

Many young women put the temple image in the middle of their quilts to remind them the temple is their focus.

“Going to the temple is one of my biggest goals,” Amanda says. “The temple is the first thing I notice when I see my quilt. I think it gives me a sense of direction.”

Maren says that when she sees the temple on her quilt, it reminds her of how she wants to go there. “It helps me to remember to dress modestly when I get ready for school and to make good choices as I go throughout the day,” she says.

The young women are all glad they accomplished this project, and they look forward to the things that they will accomplish in the future as they continue to progress and gain the pieces that will make up their lives. **NE**



See More Photos Online

Head online to youth.lds.org to see more photos of these young women and their quilts. You can link directly to the article at lds.org/go/426.