
Kids Blouse: Mousie Blousie with Heather Ross

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- This Mousie Blousie is a great way to use busier prints because it has such basic, simple lines, but it has a lot of great detail, too. It's a great first project if you've never done buttonholes or buttons before because it has a really simple fold over placket, really easy, really fun. We've finished it off with this great little detail in front with a little bit of hand stitching. It just gives it that perfect handmade finish.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- So I've cut my pieces out for my mousie blousie based on the direction on my pattern, and this is what I've got. Two blouse back pieces, two blouse back facing pieces, one blouse front piece, one blouse facing piece. I have my small, little piece that is going to become my decorative tab. I have my piece of bias trim for the decorative tab. And for materials, I have six little green buttons. These are half-inch buttons, you could use 3/4-inch if you wanted to make a little more of a statement with your tab. I have a very standard sewing machine, but it needs to have a buttonhole foot, because I'm going to put buttons on the back of my blouse as well as on the decorative tab, and those are going to open and close. I have a pair of pinking shears, I have a pair of standard sewing shears. I have my trimmer. I'm using a bone folder to push my edges back out after I've attached my blouse to my facing, but I can use anything that's pointy but not sharp. A knitting needle will work, a chopstick. And I'm ready to get started.

Chapter 3 - Make Blouse

Create decorative tab

- So, the first step is to make the little decorative tab that goes on the front of the blouse, and I'm gonna do that with this small piece here that I cut out, and this strip, which I'm now gonna turn into bias tape. You can see this was cut on the bias, which means that it has quite a lot of stretch. I wanna be careful when I'm pressing it, not to over stretch it, because I want that stretch to be there when I need it to go around this corner. I'm gonna turn it into bias tape by first folding it in half and using my iron to press a crease right down the middle. It's gonna wanna stretch a little bit when I'm doing this. That's fine, as long as you're not maxing out its elasticity. It's gonna wanna come back a little too. Then I'm gonna open it up, and I'm gonna make a second crease. This time folding that bottom edge up so that the raw edge meets that crease right in the middle. This fabric has a little bit of linen in it, which means that once you put a crease in it, the crease sort of wants to stay. You'll find the same thing happens with a lot of quilting cottons. And that's really all I need to do. I could turn the other edge, but not really gonna need to do that. The next step is to attach the bias trim to my little decorative tab. I'm lining up the raw edge of my bias tape with the raw edge of my decorative tab, and I'm lining it up so that the half that I didn't fold over is against that. So, my creases are down here. And then I'm gonna put it under my presser foot. I'm gonna drop my needle here, and then I'm gonna put a few pins in, just so I can keep track of where my bias tape needs to start to curve. And I'm gonna just plan on moving a few steps at a time. It's worth taking a couple of extra minutes at this stage, because it'll really... This decorative tab is just right there, smacked up

front and center on this blouse. If you're not confident in your machine sewing skills, definitely just sew it by hand. It's not very much. It's gonna happen really quickly. All right. And now I'm ready to start stitching. Anytime you feel like you're getting a little off track when you're sewing like this, you can always pick up your presser foot, leave your needle in the fabric, and into the round a little bit. And then of course you can also always hand crank, which is the fool proof method when you're worried about these little details. It really does make a huge difference. Okay, now I'm gonna put in a few more pins. And now my bias trim is bunching up in the center there, but that's what it's supposed to be doing. So, don't worry about that. This is kind of like driving eventually. Your hands just start to do it for you. Don't tell my husband I said that about driving. He accused me of not paying attention a lot, and I just sort of admitted it. And then just inching around. So, you can see it's all bunching up in the middle, that's fine. It's gonna get turned later. If you make a mistake, just stop. Pull your stitches out and do it again. This just isn't a big enough piece to worry too much. In fact, if you really mess it up, just cut a new one. All right, that was the most difficult part of this whole project. Now, the next step is to turn this. But before I do, first, I wanna trim off my excess bias. I'm gonna use my pinking shears, and I'm just gonna go right around that edge if I just turned it, all of that excess seam allowance there would be stuck jammed inside, and you don't want that. That's what's gonna make it bulky. By giving it a nice trim and then turning it like so means that I have a nice gentle curve right along the bottom. So, I'm gonna go back over here to my iron. I'm turning my edge. I'm using that center seam as a guide. I'm folding over that other side. Your crease will already be there from last time. I'm just gonna follow that crease, bring it around, tuck that in to cover up the raw edge. And you can use your iron while you're doing this. That's gonna make it a lot easier. It's a little meticulous, but in the end you're gonna have such a cute little detail. It's really worth it. You can see it's really starting to take shape now. This is really a wonderful project for all of these prints. It's tough sometimes to find a really cute little apparel piece that will not look ridiculous when made up in a really lively print, but this piece is really perfect. All right, we're gonna hold off on finishing that turned edge, but you can really see how it's coming together. I'll put a couple pins in the top just to kinda hold it in shape. And I can put this aside until a little later. And move on to the next step.

Sew blouse facing and body

- The next step is to attach my blouse facing front and back together at the shoulder seams. The back pieces look like this. And this is the shoulder seam, right here. The front piece, which there's only one of, looks like this, and the shoulder seams are here. It's a little bit of an odd-shaped piece, but there are markings on your pattern. It's worth transferring that information over if you think you might mess it up. So I'm gonna take my back facing piece, and I'm gonna line up my shoulder seam. And use, just a pin should probably do it. Then I'm gonna do the same thing on the other side. Don't worry about these overlapping. That's because they're pockets. They're supposed to overlap. And then I'm gonna use a three-eighths inch seam allowance. (sewing machine running) (sewing machine running) And then I'm gonna move back over to my ironing area and press those seams open. And I'm just gonna press those seams right towards the back of my blouse. The most important thing is that they're going in the same direction, back or front isn't a huge deal. And then, since there are a few edges on my facing that aren't getting turned, I wanna clean them up with a really quick zigzag stitch so that they don't fray, even though they're on the inside of the blouse and they won't show. So I'm lining up the raw edge, just that edge, pretty much with the end of the hole that the needle falls into because I know that that's the farthest that the needle can go to the right. And I'm gonna

put my stitch dial on a large zigzag stitch. Every machine is a little different, in terms of the way you'll find that. And I'm just gonna sew right along the edge. (sewing machine running) I'm really just trying to minimize fraying. If you have a surger, you could surge this. But it's pretty curved, so I certainly wouldn't trust myself on one of those fast surgeons. I think those are really great for straight seams or slight curves. (sewing machine running) I don't have to go all the way around, because some of these will get sewn into seams. (sewing machine running) (sewing machine running) I'm gonna lay this out for you when I'm done so you can see exactly what I did. (sewing machine running) (sewing machine running) So here's my neck opening here. And I've cleaned up all along this edge and all along this edge. These are my arm holes, so I didn't mess with those. Now I'm ready to put my back and front pieces together on my main blouse. It's really quick. We're basically just gonna flip them over, right sides together. For my front and back pieces. I've always been sort of lazy with pins, but any time I'm making something for my daughter, I'm suddenly kind of generous with the pinning. I don't know what that's all about. And now I'm ready to sew these with a three-eighths inch seam allowance. Oh, oops, it's still on zigzag. (sewing machine running) (sewing machine running) Because of the way this blouse goes together, it's actually a really good idea to just clean up your bottom, your bottom edge, as well. And I'm gonna do that with a zigzag stitch. (sewing machine running) I've got three edges to sew. The bottom edge of my blouse front, and the bottom edge of both pieces of my blouse back. (sewing machine running) (sewing machine running) All right, now I'm ready to attach this to my facing. I'm gonna press flat those seam allowances the same way I did on my facings, so that they're pointing towards the back. And then I'm gonna turn my little blouse over. And I'm gonna take my little decorative tab, and I'm gonna center it right on the front of my blouse. And I can line up my my fold lines because they're still there on this linen. And then, I'm gonna grab my facing pieces. And I'm gonna line them up, right on top. I'm gonna get really good results if I line up my shoulder seams. That's the most important thing at this stage. Once I get it all lined up, I'm just gonna go over the whole thing with an iron. Help sort of smoosh everything into place. Now some facings just go around the neck, some just the arm hole. This is a little more complicated. I'm actually gonna pin and sew, starting from the inside of my placket of my facing. I'm gonna sew up all the way up and around my neck opening, back down and back over. Then I'm also going to sew my arm hole. From this point all the way around to this point, and on this side as well, and I'm gonna stop there. I'm gonna put some pins in. I'm gonna start working my pins by matching my shoulder seams. That's gonna keep everything even. And then I'm gonna go back over to my sewing machine. I'm gonna use a three-eighths inch seam allowance, and I'm gonna sew all along those edges.

Assemble blouse

- So again, as three-eighths inch seam allowance. I'm starting with my arm hole. Make sure you've adjusted back to a straight stitch. (whirring) (snipping) (whirring) (faster whirring) Now, here's where I'm sewing over my little decorative tab. (whirring) See, it's a couple layers of fabric but it really won't make a difference. (whirring) (faster whirring) And one more arm hole. (whirring) (snip) And now I'm ready to pink those edges that I just sewed and flip my blouse right side out.

Finish seams and hem

- So I'm gonna use pinking shears and I'm gonna trim off the seam allowance in the neck opening and in the arm holes that I just stitched. And I'm gonna try to get close to the stitching without cutting through it. And again, this just makes it a lot easier when you turn it, and keeps it from

getting too bulky inside that turn edge. This is the point that I'm cutting through that little decorative tab right along the top, so. I spend a lot of money on my sewing shears. But, I don't spend a lot of money on my pinking shears and that's because pinking shears can't be sharpened. At least not ones that I know about. Their life span's a little shorter, unfortunately. Now I'm doing my arm hole. I'm just moving sort of slowly because, it is sort of a deep curve, and I don't wanna accidentally cut through my stitches. And, one more arm hole. Alright. And now with all of that excess fabric pinked away, is the fun part. Gonna reach through, underneath my facing, through my shoulder, and I'm gonna pull those back pieces right through. Both sides. All the way through. And down here... on my back pieces, I'm gonna trim the corner, make that a pocket. And see, because we finished that edge, it's just flipping itself right up there, we don't even need to press it again, which is great. Have a little excess there. I'm not sure what happened. You can do a lot with your finger tips but eventually you do have to move into bone folder territory. Especially when it comes... to corners. Like the one you just made on the pocket. Right there. And then I can press. Alright, let's flip it over and see what the front looks like. I can see when I look at it on the front that my decorative tab is straight and centered which is always the most important part. Because it's front and center. Big detail on this blouse. And now I'm ready to sew up my side seams which is really the last step in construction. After that it's all just finishing. I'm gonna flip the back open like this. I'm gonna take my bottom edge from my back piece and match it up to my front piece. And I'm gonna open up that facing, matching up my seam there, and I'm just gonna put a few pins in. And I'm gonna sew that up with a 3/8 inch seam allowance. When I reach the seam where the facing attaches to the blouse, I'm just gonna leave my needle in and turn it a little bit. And then I'll do exactly the same thing to the other side. Now I can pull my pins out. And I can use my iron to press the arm hole facing flat... while I press that seam flat. This Japanese linen cotton blend always has this very distinct smell when you press it. I love it. Now, you'll notice that because of the way that we finished the bottom edge before we did the placket, it's already sort of turning up for us. So we're just gonna extend that. I'm gonna work right along that curved edge. And now I'm ready just to top stitch that down. Alright. And then, all we have left is our button holes, and sewing down our decorative tab and adding a button just for fun.

Chapter 4 - Finish Blouse

Finish button placket

- Now I'm ready to finish my button plackets on the back of my blouse. The first thing I'm gonna do is turn over my placket edges by one inch, and press. I'm gonna do that on both sides. You'll find on your pattern piece markings for where your buttonholes should go. It changes slightly for each size difference, so there isn't an exact measurement between buttons. I've gone ahead and transferred the buttonhole markings for my blouse, which is a size 12 months, onto the back of my placket already. You can see here where I've transferred the markings, the buttonhole markings, onto my fabrics using a water-soluble pen. Now, before I sew my buttonholes up, I'm gonna sew my plackets down. I'm just gonna edge stitch right along placket's edge. (whirring) Now I'm ready to do my buttonholes. The first thing I have to do is change my foot. Very, very easy. Every machine's a little different. My buttonhole foot just pops on like that. Some of them, you have to unscrew something. The best thing to do is to check the instruction manual that came with your machine about not only putting your buttonhole foot on, but making a buttonhole. But more or less, it's always gonna be the same number of steps. I'm gonna push my buttonhole foot so that it's all the way forward. I'm gonna line up the very top of my buttonhole marking with the very top of where those two red lines match

up. Now, in some cases, with some buttonhole feet, you start in the back and move forward, not with this one. I'm gonna put my buttonhole dial on one. (whirring) I'm going to sew until that red line hits the bottom of my buttonhole mark. Then I'm gonna pull my needle all the way up. I'm gonna turn my dial so that it's on the second buttonhole stage. Take a few steps. Leave my needle out and all the way up. Move to position three. (whirring) Come back until my red lines meet up at the top. Go to position four, and finish my buttonhole. I'm gonna do exactly the same thing for all of my other buttonholes. All right, that's my last buttonhole. Now I'm gonna show you how to open up a buttonhole. My tool of choice for opening up a buttonhole is a nice, new, sharp seam ripper. You can also buy tools that are made specifically for opening up a buttonhole that look a little different, they look like a little rocker, but these are great. A seam ripper has one very, very sharp area, and it's right down in here, in this curved place just between the two tines. That's a little blade. The rest of the seam ripper is not that sharp. I'm gonna use a pin to make a little blockade at the top of my buttonhole. Just gonna put it through right there at the top. Then I'm gonna take my seam ripper, and I'm gonna poke it down into that bottom corner of my buttonhole. Then I'm gonna use that little, sharp curved area to cut the fabric in between those two rows of stitching. If you do it carefully, you won't cut any threads. That pin will stop you from going too far. I'm gonna open up the rest of my buttonholes, and then we're gonna sew on some buttons. Now I'm gonna line up my plackets with my buttonholes on top. Through my open buttonhole, I'm gonna use my disappearing ink pen to make a dot right in the center. When I open that up, that's where I need to sew on my button. To sew my button on, I'm gonna use embroidery floss. Gonna divide it. I'm gonna sew using two skeins. I'm just looking for a little bit of contrast. I just think it looks really sweet when you have a little bit of contrast holding your buttons on. I have to use kind of a larger needle. I'm gonna make a knot in one end. A little slip knot. Then I'm gonna push my needle in one side and out the other side of that little dot. Then I can come up through one hole, and through the one on the opposite with the diagonal, and again, right through that blue dot. I'm gonna come up through that third hole, drop down on the diagonal, staying as close to that blue dot as I can the whole time. I'm gonna repeat that a few more times. Now, if your baby is like my baby, and she likes to squirm around while you're trying to dress her, you also have the option. Ooh, that's not gonna go. You also have the option of sewing snaps. If you like the look of buttons, but the convenience of snaps, you can actually sew a button onto the outside placket, but instead of making a buttonhole, just sew a snap on the other side of it. Sort of cheating. Now, once you've done that a few times, your next step is going to be to wrap your thread around the button. That creates a little bit of height off the fabric. Almost turns into a shank button. You can do that a couple of times. Then you're gonna push your needle through all of that thread that you just made. My big embroidery needle's having a little bit of a tough time, but it'll come eventually. Then before that loop completely closes up, you're gonna tie a knot. I like, especially if it's going on something for a child, I like to make an extra knot or two. You're gonna sew the rest of your buttons on exactly the same way. I wanna show you something in the front, though, because don't forget, in addition to the buttons that you have going on in the back of your blouse, you're gonna need one on the front, too. You'll find a mark on your pattern that will show you exactly where the button goes, but it's just dead center. It's not much of a trick to it. I'm gonna use my orange thread again because I really like the way it looks. I think it has a nice contrast. As long as I start in that dot and I stay in it, my button's gonna be in the right spot. Now, I'm also going to attach my decorative tab to my little dress with these stitches. I'm going through all my layers there. Just a nice little pop of color right at the center of that button. Then I'm gonna wrap it, let's say, four times, maybe five. Push your needle through that ball of thread you just made.

Tie a knot. Do that one more time. Now, as long as I have this contrasting thread on my needle, I'm gonna walk around the outside there. Remember, we didn't sew down that little piece of bias trim, so I'm gonna do that now, and I'm gonna do it with contrasting thread. I'm gonna use a little pick stitch, which is gonna be super cute. I made a knot in one side of my thread. I'm gonna come up right underneath this edge. I'm gonna push that tail underneath there, get it out of the way. I love finishing a project with a little bit of hand sewing. I think it's really sweet. I'm just doing just a little bit of a pick stitch, just a couple steps at a time. Don't get overly ambitious 'cause we do have a curve to contend with here. It gets harder to pull the needle through when you do more than one stitch at a time. It just takes the tiniest hand-sewn detail on a piece like this, especially for a baby, makes the biggest difference. You can always use a thimble if your hand gets sore when you're hand sewing. A little bit of hand sewing in the rain in the summertime is pretty perfect. You can't see it in the shot, but there's a cold glass of white wine waiting for me, too. I'm gonna hide my thread underneath that edge, like I did last time. I'm just gonna kinda, gonna flip it over just enough to get in there, make a knot. Trim it off nice and close. Then tuck it back in using the tip of my needle. That is the last detail on a very adorable little blouse. You can really use almost any fabric print for this style. It's so clean and simple that you can get a little crazy with your fabric choice, but definitely take the time to add this little handmade detail. It really makes all the difference.