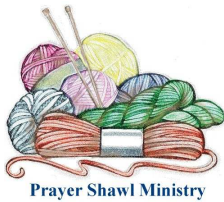


Knitting Your Prayer Shawl



Because this is a spiritual practice, before one begins the knitting (crochet) process, a blessing, prayer or wish can be said, dedicating the work of your hands and the intentions of the receiver. You may want to light a candle and play soft music to enhance your knitting time, remembering that this is a prayerful time. Here is a prayer from <http://www.shawlministry.com/prayers.htm>

St. Patrick Church - Starting Prayer - by Darcy Horon -Siepman (© 2011 All rights reserved)

Dear Lord, Bless these needles that they stay strong and light so they don't tire the hands that wield them;
Bless this yarn with strength and softness that it will form a cloth of warmth and comfort;
Bless these hands with strength and skill so they may make well crafted gifts;
Bless this heart with strength and perseverance so I will see this work through to bring comfort to those in need;
But most of all dear Lord, Bless the wearer of this cloth with strength and comfort that their burdens may be lightened and their hearts gladdened with the realization that they are loved.

Instructions

- 1. Decide the size needle you will use.** Size 11 (8) will create a slightly denser shawl and the K3 pattern will be more noticeable. Conversely, size 13 (9) will create a slightly looser, less definable pattern. Approximate finished sizes, not counting fringe, are 26" x 60" on size 11 (66 cm x 152 cm on 8) needles and 30" x 64" on 13 (76 cm x 162 cm on 9) needles.
- 2. Select your yarn.** You might pick a yarn for its color, for its texture, or for its name. Most shawls can be knit with three skeins of yarn that are six ounces (170g) and 185 yards (166.5 cm) each. If you prefer a larger shawl, you will need more yarn.
- 3. Cast on.** Cast on 57 stitches for size 13 (9) needles, 63 for size 11 (8). The pattern is K3, P3 every row. This means that you will always begin with K3 and end with K3. Any odd multiple of three will work for your shawl, depending on how wide you want to make it: 57; 63; 69; 75; 81 and so on. Follow this pattern until you achieve the desired length. You may also decide to knit every row in what is called a *garter stitch*. **Before you begin the third skein, make your fringe.**

A lap blanket for men is an alternative. In this case, you will cast on 87 stitches (size 13 (9)). This will give you a blanket that is approximately 45" (114 cm) wide. You may want to use four skeins for this project.
- 4. Make fringe.** Fringe is an individual thing. It can be long or short. You can put a piece of fringe through every stitch, or you can skip several stitches. Some people tie or sew beads to fringe, especially if the shawl is for a child. Whatever you decide, here is what you do:

Decide how long you want the fringe. Because the fringe is doubled when you fasten it to the shawl, you must cut the fringe twice the desired length. For 6" (15 cm) fringe, each strand must be 12" (30 cm) long; for 12" fringe, cut pieces 24" (60 cm), and so on.

For standard fringe, cut as many lengths as you have stitches on your needles. Reserve fringe until you have finished knitting the shawl.
- 5. Finish the shawl.** Attach the inside end of the yarn to your shawl and continue knitting until all the yarn is used up, or until you have achieved the desired length.
- 6. Cast Off Hint:** When casting off, you need to cast off with loose stitches so one end will not be smaller than the other. For those new to knitting, using a needle several sizes larger than the needle used to knit the shawl may be helpful.
- 7. Attach the fringe.** Double the yarn and, using a small crochet hook, pull the loop through the stitch. Insert the ends of the fringe through the loop and pull tight, creating a knot.
- 8. Knot the ends of the fringe.** If you are using a yarn that frays easily, consider knotting the ends of the fringe.
- 9. Give away your shawl.** If you are making the shawl for a particular person, you may want to include the history of the shawl ministry and a prayer. Many people wrap the shawl in tissue, include a sachet and a written blessing or prayer, and tie it with a leftover piece of yarn. If you are making the shawl for the church to give to someone you do not know,

contact Deane Sobol (623-0796) or Mavis Benz (467-1314). They will take the shawl and add to those which will be blessed in a church service.

Note: Canadian needle sizes are in parenthesis

Significance of K3, P3 pattern: The pattern of threes can be found in every religion and society. Human existence has three stages: birth, life and death. Time has three divisions: past, present and future. The panorama of colors is based on three primary colors. Human "being" has three parts: body, mind and spirit. The virtues frequently mentioned together are faith, hope and love (1 Corinthians 12). The rhythm of the waltz is 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3. The ability to compromise - to take two seemingly different (and oftentimes hotly disputed) points of view and create a third possibility- is another way the pattern of three plays out in our world: not this or that, but this (w)holy thing. Upon this ability to see the third, peace springs forth if we have eyes to see it. And then the "big" three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (see website: www.shawlministry.com).

Prayer Shawl Ministry FAQ

1. What are the measurements of a finished garment? The easy answer is "let the yarn tell you." Generally, rectangular shawls should be about 20 - 24" wide by 60 - 70" long (in other words - from the nape of the neck to just below the waist to gauge the width measurement; from outstretched arms' fingertip to fingertip for the length measurement).

Lap blankets can be shorter and wider. Lovely triangular-shaped patterns are available. A blanket created for a recipient who needs a wheelchair for mobility should be without fringe; a circular or fan-shaped form could be considered.

2. What kind of yarn and how much of it do I need? The skein's label should provide fiber content and cleaning instructions. Some people are sensitive to animal source fibers, so acrylic or cotton may be a better choice for charity knitting or crocheting. If the recipient is known to the crafter, a more luxurious fiber such as wool, silk, linen or alpaca would be a generous gift. On average, knitted ladies shawls take approximately 550 - 600 yards of bulky yarn, 800 - 900 yards of worsted weight, and well over 900 yards for lace weight yarns. Most often, crocheting completes garments faster, but uses up more yarn (as compared to knitting).
3. What size knitting needles or crochet hook do I need? Again, your selection is based upon the yarn. Bulky yarns usually require size 11 or 13 knitting needles, or a size 'M' or larger hook; worsted weight yarns generally require size 7 or 8 needles or a 'G' or 'H' hook; lace weight may require size 3 - 7 needles. Check the skein label for the manufacturer's recommendation, and make a sample swatch to assess the gauge you want before beginning the pattern. If you want a lacier look for a shawl or want to extend the yarn farther, use a size or two larger than the label recommends when you make your sample swatch, and see if it's the look you want.
4. What color should I choose? If the recipient is known, you may choose the person's favorite color. You may also choose from lists of colors and the basic attributes associated with them. Click on 'symbolism' and then 'color' on the shawl ministry website listed above, or use a yarn that appeals to you and will feel comfortable in your hands as you work with it.
5. Where do I turn in my completed garment? Completed shawls, blankets and garments can be given to Deane Sobol or Mavis Benz. Our crafted garments receive a final blessing from our priest or deacon and then are passed on to someone in need.