

Holiday Joy

Small hoops, large impact

PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GWEN DIXON



Brighten up your holidays with hoop art!

When do the holidays begin for you? What brings on that first feeling of Christmas joy? For me, it starts the first time I hear a certain Christmas song. From then on, I am in the holiday spirit.

Whenever it starts for you and no matter what sparks it, be sure to share it. Here is a bit of holiday joy to share in your home, on your front door, or as a gift for someone else.



MATERIALS:

burlap or another backing
wool strips or yarn for
hooking
traditional rug hook

- wool roving for needle felting
- felting needles or a three-needle felting tool

- wool fabric (new or recycled)
- sharp scissors
- red and green cotton floss

- embroidery needle
- wooden or bamboo hoop
- small piece of Styrofoam
- fabric glue



FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS TO CREATE YOUR OWN JOY HOOP.

The word “Joy” can be hooked in one color, in a variety of colors, or outlined in a different or darker shade. Use plaids, and/or different textures . . . whatever way you like it! I have hooked the samples in curvilinear lines, following the outline of the letters, but the word can also be hooked in short horizontal or vertical lines, or on a diagonal.

STEP 1: Trace or copy the template for the word, then transfer it to the backing. You can cut out the template and outline it on the backing—then you will have a template to use again. Enlarge the template, depending on the size of hoop you use and how large you want the finished project.

STEP 2: Before hooking, use your hoop to draw a circle on the backing. (If you use a marker, angle it against the hoop slightly so that you do not get marker on the hoop.) Stitch around this circle, just slightly outside of the circle. I also stitch two more circles: one 1" outside that stitched circle, and one other at 2" outside the first circle. This extra stitching prevents the backing from fraying and guides your cutting as you finish the piece.

STEP 3: Place the backing into the hoop and tighten. I used a 10" hoop for these samples.

In these samples, I hooked the tails to the back, but you can bring them to the front if you prefer. If you hook them to the back, trim them as you finish the back (described below).

STEP 4:

- 1 Hook the word “Joy”.
- 2 Cut and stitch the holly leaves and attach them to the backing.
- 3 Needle-felt the berries and attach them with stitches to the backing.
- 4 Finish the back of the hoop.

DEAR BEGINNING RUG HOOKER

STEP 5: Enlarge the leaf template to whatever size you prefer, depending on the size of your hoop and your project.

STEP 6: Trace the outline of the leaves onto freezer paper. Iron the freezer paper to the wool fabric, with the shiny side against the fabric. Cut out the leaves and peel off the paper. Stitch a running or back stitch along the length of the leaves, then stitch few veins off to the sides. If you want to, stitch them to the backing as you stitch the veins. I used three leaves in each sample, but you can use as many as you like.

STEP 7: Needle-felt the berries. Make three balls using the wool roving and felting needles. Use the Styrofoam as a base for needle felting. Place the berries on the design. I often place them where the leaves join, as a set of three. I have one sample with two holly berries only, but I think that three berries look best. Make them whatever size you like. Stitch through the backing and through the base of the berries to attach them, using red cotton floss. A Clover three-needle felting tool works well for making these berries and it takes less time than using a single felting needle.

STEP 8: Finish the back of the hoop. Take the design out of the hoop and trim around the outside circle (at the 2" stitch line). Place the burlap back in the hoop, tighten it. Fold the edge of the backing down and glue it onto the hoop using a fabric glue. Let it dry.

STEP 9: If you have used a 10" hoop, cut a circle with a 9½" diameter out of wool fabric. I often use recycled wool to finish the samples. It works well and is sturdy enough to hide



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



STEP 11

any thick or textured tails that I have brought to the back.

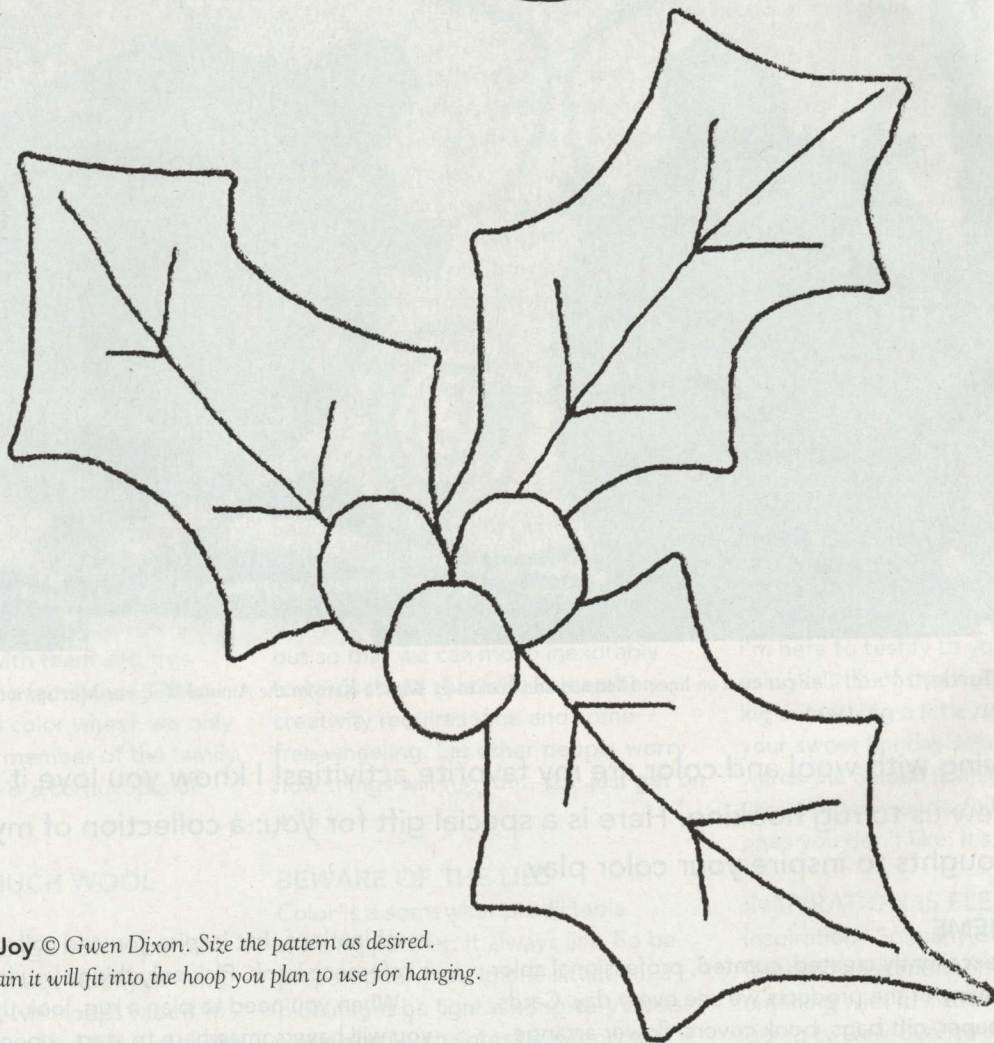
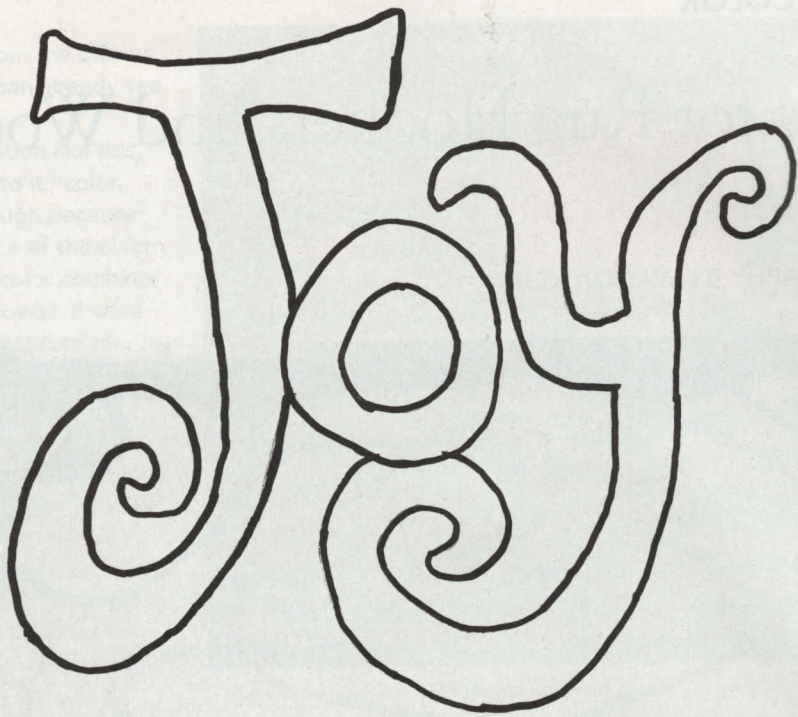
STEP 10: Glue the circle around the inside of the circle, using the fabric glue sparingly and keeping it close to the hoop and on top of the folded-over burlap.

STEP 11: Add some piping to finish the edge. Glue it down at the base of

the hoop where the circle and hoop meet. Where the piping ends meet, add a bit of extra glue so the threads don't fray.

STEP 12: Hang your Joy Hoop and enjoy it or give it as a holiday gift! **RHM**

Gwen Dixon is a fiber artist and adult educator from Riverview, New Brunswick, Canada. You can find her on Facebook, Etsy (Gwen Dixon Wool Arts), by email (gwendixonwoolarts@gmail.com) or on her website (Gwen Dixon Wool Arts).



Holiday Joy © Gwen Dixon. Size the pattern as desired.
Make certain it will fit into the hoop you plan to use for hanging.