

Christmas Balls –The Christmas Eve Collection

by Mary Ann Stephens

There's nothing like a child's excitement on Christmas Eve. And it's contagious – even the dog can't sleep! Do you remember? "What's that sound? Is it reindeer on the rooftop?" "No, not yet. Come away from the window! Here, decorate these gingerbread men with me, so we'll have nice cookies to put out for Santa."

Pattern overview:

Three designs for circularly-knit, ball-shaped ornaments with symmetrical, stranded knitting motifs repeated across all four panels, and a bit of optional embroidery. Once the knitting is done, the balls are stuffed with batting.

Suggested yarn:

DK / sport weight wool yarn. For any of the designs, you'll only need a partial ball, or remnants, of each of the colors shown.

Reindeer

A = Off White
B = Red
C = Green
D = Brown

Gingerbread

A = Off White
B = Red
C = Green
D = Brown
E = Black

Puppy #1

A = Beige
B = Green
C = Off White
D = Pink
E = Grey
F = Black

Puppy #2

A = Brown
B = Blue
C = Beige
D = Pink
E = Grey
F = Black



As of October 2019, this is a free, personal-use pattern. It may also be used for charitable fund raising.

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GAUGE:

The gauge on the ball shown is about 28 stitches per 4" / 10cm. But, in this case, the gauge is not crucial. What matters is that you're happy with the resulting fabric and that you keep your gauge consistent across multiple balls, especially if they will be hanging together on your tree.

NEEDLES:

US #3 / 3.25mm for loose knitters

US #4 / 3.5mm for tight knitters or whatever size needle you need to obtain your preferred gauge. You can use double-pointed needles (helpful for the I-cord hanging loop), one long circular needle with the magic loop method (samples were knit on a 40" long circular) or two circular needles.

NOTIONS:

Wool or polyester batting. Wool makes a nice, firm stuffing for balls that are meant to be decorative keepsakes. But, if yours are apt to be over-loved by messy little hands, or subjected to rousing Christmas morning games of dodgeball, fill them with common polyester batting which is softer, less expensive and will wash and dry easily.

Tapestry needle For optional embroidery and for defining the height and shape of the ball; you'll prefer a long needle for that purpose.

Crochet hook For optional crocheted loop.

ABBREVIATIONS:

A, B, C, D, E, F = yarn colors

K = knit

K2tog = knit two stitches together as one stitch.

M = make one, back = insert left needle *back-to-front* under horizontal strand between previous stitch and next stitch; knit into *front* of stitch to increase one stitch.



m = make one, front = insert left needle *front-to-back* under horizontal strand between previous stitch and next stitch; knit into *back* of stitch to increase one stitch.

rd(s) = round(s)

rem = remaining

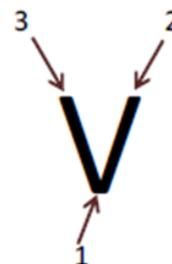
rep = repeat

ssk = "slip, slip, knit" = slip one stitch knitwise, slip another stitch knitwise, knit both slipped stitches together as one.

st(s) = stitch(es)

Optional Embroidery stitches:

Duplicate stitch: Working back to front, bring threaded tapestry needle up at base of stitch's "V" (point #1 in diagram); insert needle, front to back, at top right edge of same "V" (point #2); bring needle behind both legs of stitch immediately above stitch you're working on; bring needle to front at top left of "V" (point #3); insert needle, front to back, at same point #1.



French knot: Working back to front, bring threaded tapestry needle up at desired spot for knot; wrap yarn around needle 2 or 3 times with wraps progressing from upper end of needle toward the needle's tip; holding yarn taut with other hand, slide wraps down to tip of needle as you position needle slightly away from starting point; use other hand's thumb to hold wraps down at starting point as working hand pulls needle through to back.

INSTRUCTIONS:

It's a good idea to read through the entire pattern before starting to knit!

Using A, cast on 12 sts, leaving a yarn tail about 6"/15.2cm long. Distribute the sts evenly among your needles. Work chart rows 1 through 34 as follows: Start at lower right corner, always read from right to left; each square equals 1 st to be worked in color and method indicated in chart legend; 4 repeats of one chart row equal 1 complete rd of knitting. (*If you're wondering how to knit from these charts, or why the charts are shaped as they are, [read these notes of mine](#) for more information.*) Turn the ball inside out and weave in any loose ends. Turn the ball right side out and knit the remainder of the chart. Do *not* bind off.

HANGER METHODS:

I-cord loop (shown): *K2tog, rep from * until only 3 sts rem. Align the 3 rem sts on one needle and work the I-cord hanging loop as follows: Without turning work, * slide sts from left end of needle to right end of needle; bring yarn around back of sts, from left to right; K 3 sts; rep from * until I-cord is about 2 ½ "/6.4cm long, or desired length; bring yarn around back of sts, knit all 3 sts together (1 st rem). Break off yarn, leaving a tail of about 8" / 20.3cm inches; run the loose end through the 1 rem st and tighten. OR...

Crocheted chain: Leaving about 39"/1 meter of yarn, break off yarn from work and run the cut end through each of the rem 12 sts; tighten. Starting at the top of the ball, crochet a chain to desired length, leaving a yarn tail about 6" / 15.2cm long; run the cut end through your last chain st and tighten.

FINISHING THE BALL:

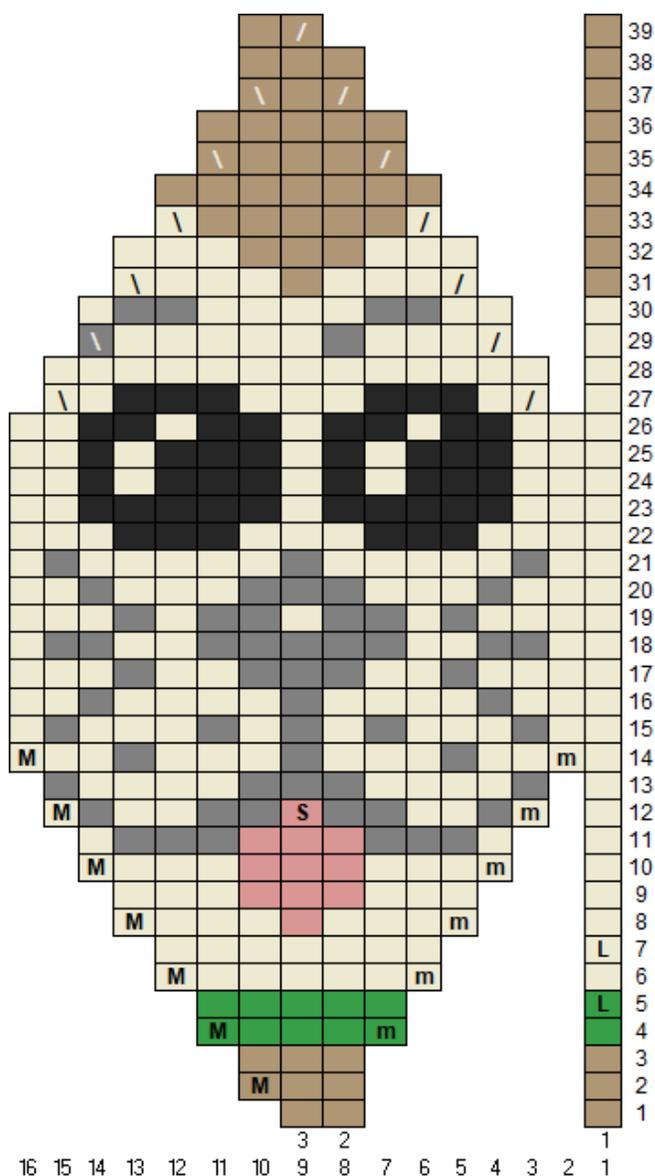
Stuff the ball: Push batting clumps in through the bottom opening to fill the ball. Thread the cast-on yarn end through a tapestry needle; run the end through each of the sts around the bottom opening; tighten to close the bottom hole; weave the loose end in place.

Secure the hanger: Thread the I-cord or crochet chain loose yarn end through a tapestry needle; run the threaded needle through the base of the I-cord / crochet chain loop, through the center of the ball, out the bottom of the ball; weave the loose end in place at the bottom of the ball, ensuring that it is pulled to the proper length to ensure a nicely rounded ball - not droopy (too loose) and not squat (too tight)...*juuuuust right!*

"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"



Puppy Ball Chart



Legend:

Each square = 1 stitch

Work each square without a symbol as a knit stitch, using the color shown:

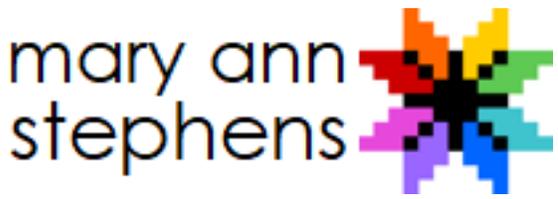
- = A
- = C
- = E
- = B
- = D
- = F

Work squares with symbols as follows, using color shown within that square:

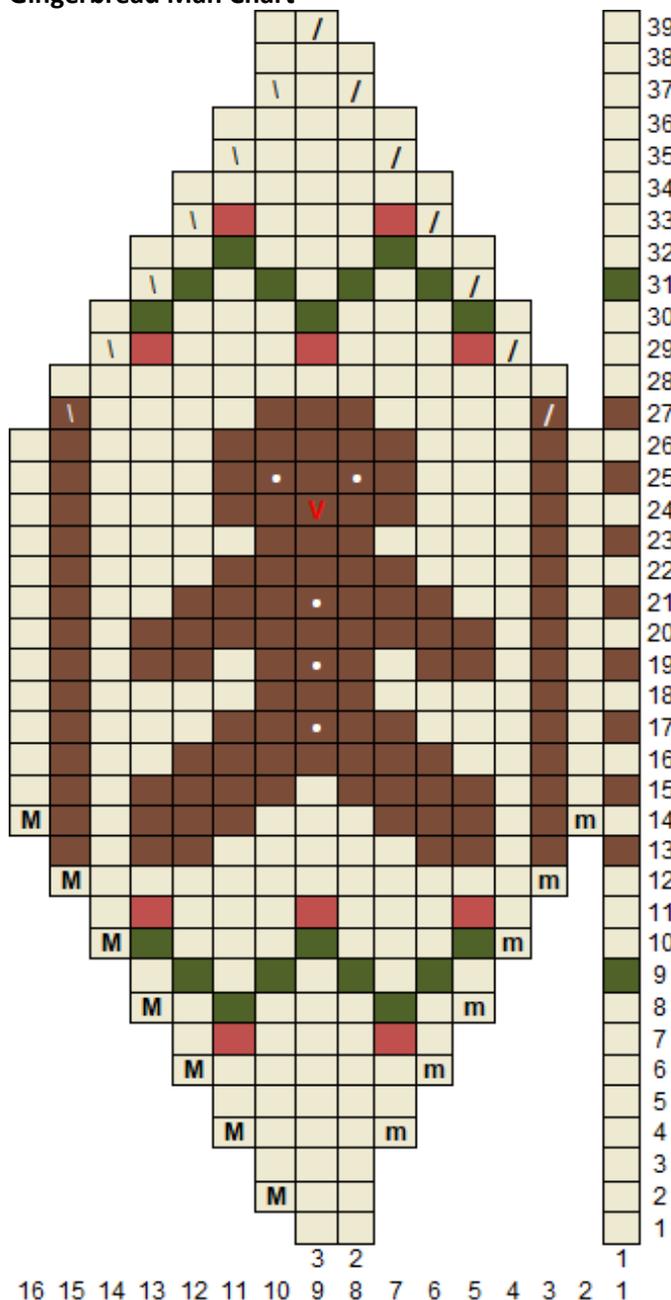
- M** = "Make one, back" = insert left needle BACK-to-front under horizontal strand between previous stitch and next stitch; knit into front of stitch to increase one stitch.
- m** = "Make one, front" = insert left needle FRONT-to-back under horizontal strand between previous stitch and next stitch; knit into back of stitch to increase one stitch.
- /** = K2tog, a right-leaning decrease = knit two stitches together, using this stitch and the next stitch.
- ** = SSK, a left-leaning decrease = slip this stitch knitwise, slip the next stitch knitwise, knit both of these slipped stitches together. (Alternatively, you may "K2tog through back loop".)
- L** = ONLY for the first st in the round, lift the stitch below the first stitch on the left needle and place it on the left needle; knit it together with the first stitch, to omit the EOR jog.
- S** = Slip purlwise - **optional**. (**Note:** Rows #11 & #12 both have three colors in them. There are a few ways you can work them: You can knit all three colors at once, or you can knit with C & E, and embroider in D, using duplicate stitch, once you're done knitting. I knit Row#11 with all three colors, and Row #12 with just C & E, slipping the one st in D.

Stitch count per repeat after cast-on
Stitch count per repeat by middle of ball

See the "Suggested Yarn" section on page 1 for the substitute yarn colors for the other Puppy ball.



Gingerbread Man Chart



Gingerbread Chart Legend:

Each square = 1 stitch

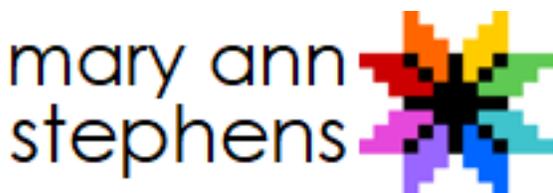
Work each square without a symbol as a knit stitch, using the color shown:

- = A
- = C
- = B
- = D

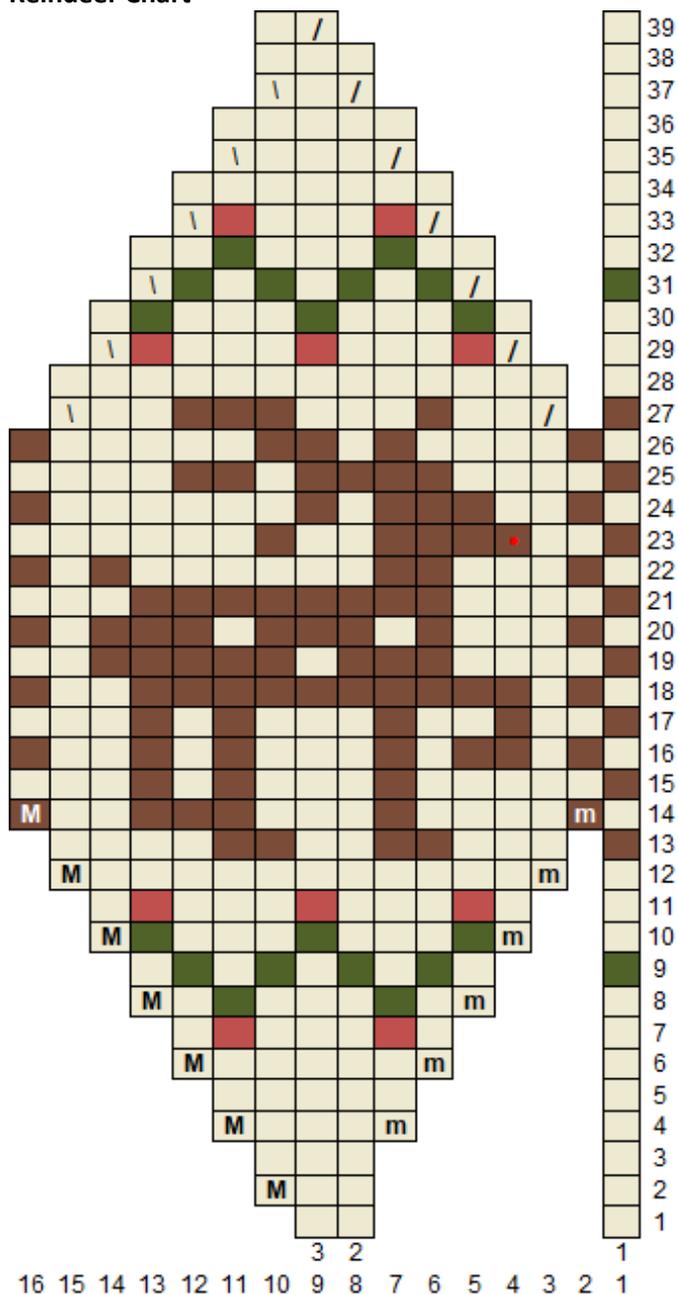
Work squares with symbols as follows, using color shown within that square:

- M** = "Make one, back" = insert left needle BACK-to-front under horizontal strand between previous stitch and next stitch; knit into front of stitch to increase one stitch.
- m** = "Make one, front" = insert left needle FRONT-to-back under horizontal strand between previous stitch and next stitch; knit into back of stitch to increase one stitch.
- /** = K2tog, a right-leaning decrease = knit two stitches together, using this stitch and the next stitch.
- ** = SSK, a left-leaning decrease = slip this stitch knitwise, slip the next stitch knitwise, knit both of these slipped stitches together. (Alternatively, you may "K2tog through back loop".)
- Embroider with French knot, using E.
- V** Embroider with Duplicate stitch in B.

stitch count per repeat after cast on.
stitch count per repeat by middle of the ball.



Reindeer Chart



Reindeer Chart Legend:

Each square = 1 stitch

Work each square without a symbol as a knit stitch, using the color shown:

- = A
- = C
- = B
- = D

Work squares with symbols as follows, using color shown within that square:

- M** = "Make one, back" = insert left needle BACK-to-front under horizontal strand between previous stitch and next stitch; knit into front of stitch to increase one stitch.
- m** = "Make one, front" = insert left needle FRONT-to-back under horizontal strand between previous stitch and next stitch; knit into back of stitch to increase one stitch.
- /** = K2tog, a right-leaning decrease = knit two stitches together, using this stitch and the next stitch.
- ** = SSK, a left-leaning decrease = slip this stitch knitwise, slip the next stitch knitwise, knit both of these slipped stitches together. (Alternatively, you may "K2tog through back loop".)
- Embroider with French knot, using B.

stitch count per repeat after cast on.
stitch count per repeat by middle of the ball.

