

Felting & Fellowship with Fritz

Needle felting seemed so confusing to me the first time I encountered it. How on earth would stabbing fluff result in a sculpted, intricate fox, or a delicate bee? The science behind it is fascinating- by utilizing the barbs on the felting needle, you are essentially knotting the imperfect texture of the wools together, compacting it tighter and tighter until it reaches the desired shape. Still sounds pretty wild, right?

There are countless techniques, tools, and wools to work with, but for this first project, I have put together a supply list for you to help you start.

The most essential shape to learn to make in felting is the sphere. Once you've mastered that shape, you just tweak and add things on or tighten them in to create the form and the details of the piece you are working on. I think starting with this particular project is helpful because it gives you an opportunity to do just that, developing this essential skill, and then giving you the freedom to explore the imperfections and 'will of the wool' that give your creations their own unique look and feel.

You may want to purchase your supplies yourself, if so, let me know and I can provide you with some really great links. Otherwise, you can purchase a starter kit that I've compiled with everything you'll need to get started and complete this project. Contact the church office for additional details!

○ **The supplies needed are:**

- 1/2 Oz. Core Wool
- Assorted Fall Colors of Merino or comparable Tops roving- oranges, reds, yellows, greens
- BFL or other "curl" wool for accents/vines
- 3-4 felting needles
- Leather finger cots
- Foam Workpiece
- Pipe Cleaners & Yarn (Fall colors)

The kits that I have available include all of the above except the finger cots, which you can purchase online or at most craft stores. I will mention that if you are purchasing your supplies yourself, I suggest contacting me for my resources list or purchasing from a local farmer or artisan, or Etsy, rather than from a craft store, as the value and quality of what you will get are not quite on par with the prices.

This craft does require you to be comfortable making repetitive motions with your hands/wrists, so if you have concerns about cramping/arthritis/carpal tunnel, you may need to consult your doctor before participating. There is also a fairly high likelihood that you will inevitably stab yourself by accident with your needle at some point... its part of the learning process, but I always include that caveat! Once you get a feel for the depth needed for your 'stabs' and the needle itself, it becomes a skill you can even do while multitasking, but as with any project involving a needle or sharp object, take care and caution, and always wash/disinfect and use a topical antibiotic cream if you do slip and prick your finger. The leather or silicone finger cots can help reduce these slips, but do make it a bit harder to maneuver your wool.

We will focus on creating a solid wool, needle felted pumpkin. You can choose the colors and style of pumpkin, and I will assist you in technique. If you are feeling brave, we can also move on to a few more advanced techniques that will help you embellish your piece, or you are welcome to make more than one! Most of all this is a chance to learn a new hobby and enjoy the fellowship of being together, sharing our gifts!