

Christmas Crib

The Christmas crib features all the figures in the Nativity, which can be displayed and enjoyed every year. The standing figures are made in the same basic way, beginning with a thin tapered body shape which has a circular cardboard base. The outer garments, sleeves etc are then added to the basic shape. Many of these items are the same on several figures and basic instructions for these are given after the instructions for the basic figure. Mary is a seated figure, requiring a separate set of instructions. You should begin by referring to the instructions for the figure you are about to make.

Measurements: Basic standing figures — 20cm [8in] high; Mary — 14cm [5½in] high; sheep — 7cm [2¾in] long from nose to tail.

Materials: 3mm [No 11, USA 2] knitting needles; cardboard; small amount of stuffing for each figure; oddments of yarn.

Safety note: The Christmas crib figures are intended for display and should not be made as playthings for young children.

Attaching the pieces: When sewing the various pieces to the basic figures, use ordinary matching sewing threads for a neat finish. Alternatively, split double knitting yarn to get a finer strand. Sew on pieces with the minimum of stitches.

Basic figure

This is the same for all the standing figures. Begin at lower edge of body and using colour required cast on 24 sts.

1st row: (K1, inc K wise into next st) to end — 36 sts. Beginning with a P row, continue in st-st *.
Work 21 rows.

★★ Shape body

Next row: K8, K2tog, K16, K2tog, K8 — 34 sts. St-st 9 rows.

Next row: K8, K2tog, K14, K2tog, K8 — 32 sts. St-st 9 rows.

Next row: [waistline] K8, K2tog, K12, K2tog, K8 — 30 sts. St-st 9 rows.

Next row: K8, K2tog, K10, K2tog, K8 — 28 sts. St-st 6 rows.

Dec for neck

Next row: (P2tog) to end — 14 sts. Break off yarn and join on colour required for neck and head. St-st 4 rows for neck.

Inc for head

Next row: K5, inc K wise into next 4 sts, K5 — 18 sts. St-st 7 rows.

Break off yarn and join on colour required for hair.

Next row: (K2tog) to end — 9 sts. B & T tightly.

To make up

Oversew row ends together, leaving a gap in seam in upper portion of body. This seam will be at centre back of the figure. Turn right side out.

For the base cut a 6cm [2¼in] diameter circle of cardboard. The base should be quite rigid, so glue two or more thicknesses of cardboard together if necessary. Push the base inside the cast on edge of body. Ease the cast on edge into position round edge of base, so that about six knitted rows of the body are turned over onto the underside of base.

Stuff the lower portion of figure below the first body shaping row, keeping it the same size and shape as cardboard base. Continue stuffing body, forming a slightly tapered shape. Stuff head. Stuff neck lightly. Oversew gap in body seam.

To shape neck, use matching yarn to gather tightly round the first knitted row of neck. Repeat with last knitted row of neck. Now wind matching yarn tightly round and round the neck then knot ends. Sew ends into neck. Hold onto the base and smooth the figure upwards so that body is quite upright and not bending over in any direction. The figure should now measure 20cm [8in] from base to top of head.

Eyes

Mark the eye positions with pins, 7 knitted rows above the head inc row leaving 2 clear knitted sts between the pins. Using black yarn, work a small vertical back-stitch below one marked position. Work another back-stitch at same position. Repeat for the other eye.

Nose

Use yarn to match face. Starting between the eyes work a vertical back-stitch downwards, making the stitch a little longer than the eye stitches. Work two more loose back-stitches at same position, so that the nose protrudes ★★★.

Basic sash

Using colour required cast on 36 sts. St-st 3 rows, then cast off. Place sash around waist of figure and oversew row ends together at centre back.

Basic gown

Begin at neck edge and using colour required cast on 14 sts.

1st row: Inc K wise into every st — 28 sts.

Begin shaping

1st row: K2, P to last 2 sts, K2.

2nd row: K.

3rd row: K2, P to last 2 sts, K2.

4th row: (K6, m1) twice, K to last 12 sts, (m1, K6) twice — 32 sts.

Repeat these four rows 5 more times — 52 sts.

Continue in st-st, but K the first 2 sts and last 2 sts on every P row as before.

St-st 32 rows, or until the gown is 1cm [¾in] shorter than basic figure measuring from neck to base; ending with a K row. G-st 4 rows, then cast off.

To block the knitted piece

Wet the piece thoroughly, then squeeze out excess moisture in a towel. Place the gown on the basic figure with P side of st-st outside. Smooth it around the figure with the g-st edges almost meeting at the front. The cast on edge should be around the neck and cast off edge should be level with base.

Now push pins straight through the front g-st edges and into the figure at intervals — you will need about 8 pins to each border. Leave until



the gown is completely dry, then remove it from the figure. Refer to the instructions for each figure for sewing the gown in place, noting that K side of st-st is the *right* side.

Basic sleeves

Make two alike.

Begin at lower edge and using colour required cast on 20 sts. G-st 2 rows.

Beginning with a K row, continue in st-st.

Dec 1 st at each end of next and every following 4th row until 14 sts remain. St-st 17 rows.

Next row: (K2tog) to end — 7 sts. B & T tightly.

Oversew row ends of each sleeve together. Turn right side out. The sleeve seam should run down the centre of the sleeve piece, forming the underarm seam. Push a little stuffing inside the upper portions of sleeves.

Note: For the Wise man in green, the sleeves are sewn to the basic figure. For all the other figures, the sleeves are sewn on *after* adding the gown.

Pin the top edges of the sleeves to sides of the figure 1cm [¾in] below the neck. Now sew 2cm [¾in] of the upper sections of the sleeves to the figure. When figure is wearing a gown, sew through gown and into figure when sewing sleeves in place.

Basic hands

Make two alike.

Using colour to match head, cast on 6 sts loosely. St-st 12 rows. B & T tightly, for end of hand.

With K side of st-st outside, oversew row ends of each hand together. Stuff hands, then oversew across cast on sts. Push these ends of hands inside lower edges of sleeves at position shown in the illustration of the figure you are making. Leave half of the length of the hand pieces protruding. Make sure that the hand seams are facing inwards against the figure.

Sew lower edges of sleeves to hands.

Basic beard

Begin at lower edge and using colour to match hair cast on 2 sts. Work in g-st throughout.

Inc 1 st at each end of first and every following row until there are 14 sts.

G-st 4 rows.

Next row: K1, (K2tog) 6 times, K1 — 8 sts. Cast off.

Pin cast off edge to face under the nose, curving up slightly to each side of head. Sew to face just below the cast off edge. Catch row ends to sides of face where they touch.

The Three Wise Men

Green figure

Basic figure

Using dark blue work as given for basic figure as far as *. Now work in stripes as follows, breaking and joining colours as necessary.

Work 11 rows dark blue, 4 green, 2 dark blue, 2 green and 2 dark blue.

Continue in green and work as given for basic figure from ** to ★★★, using light pink for neck and head and black for hair.

Using light green, work running stitches through the knitted sts around the stripes at lower edge of body, as shown in the illustration.

Sash, sleeves and hands

Add basic sash using dark blue. Make basic sleeves, using dark blue for the g-st rows and green for remainder. Sew sleeves to sides of basic figure. Add basic hands using light pink.

Gown

Using light green make basic gown, but work 2 extra rows of st-st before working the g-st border at lower edge. After blocking the knitted piece, use double dark blue yarn to work a line of running stitches along each front g-st border as shown in the illustration.

Legs [make two pieces alike]

The following knitted strip makes one pair of legs.

Begin at top edge and cast on 19 sts.

1st row: K9, P1, K9.

2nd row: P9, K1, P9.

Repeat these two rows once, then first row once.

Cast off.

Starting at one set of row ends and with K side of st-st outside, roll up the strip very tightly as far as the centre line of sts. Catch rolled-up section to centre sts. Roll up and sew the other set of row ends in same way. Sew one pair of legs under body at front and the other pair under body at back.

Head

Begin at top edge and cast on 14 sts. P 1 row.

Next row: K4, inc K wise into next 6 sts, K4 — 20 sts.

Join on another strand of cream yarn. Using double yarn and beginning with a P row, st-st 3 rows.

Break off one strand and continue in single yarn.

K 1 row.

Dec for face

Next row: K2, (K2tog) 8 times, K2 — 12 sts.

Beginning with a P row, st-st 3 rows and dec 1 st at each end of 3rd row — 10 sts. St-st 2 more rows.

Next row: (K2tog) to end — 5 sts.

B & T tightly.

Noting that K side of st-st on face is right side, oversew row ends together. Turn right side out and stuff. Leave cast on edge open. Note that the oversewn seam will run underneath the head.

Eyes and nose

Work the stitches in black, starting and fastening off in stuffing at open cast on edge. For one eye work a small back-stitch, 2 knitted rows down the st-st face section. Work again over the first back-stitch. For other eye repeat in the adjacent st. At end of face work a small V-shape for nose.

Push a little more stuffing inside head to cover black yarn ends. Gather round cast on sts, pull up tightly and fasten off. Pin the seam [at section of head which was worked in double yarn], to front of body above the B & T sts. Sew head to body as pinned.

Ears [make two alike]

Cast on 5 sts.

1st row: K3, turn.

2nd row: Slip first st K wise, P to end. Cast off P wise.

Gather up longest set of row ends. Pin these edges to section of head worked in double yarn, at sides of head. Make sure that K side of st-st faces forwards. Sew ears in place as pinned.

Tail

Work tail as for ears. Sew to back of body above the gathered cast on sts, with P side of st-st outside.



Mary

Skirt

Begin at lower edge and using blue cast on 32 sts.

1st row: (K1, inc K wise into next st) to end — 48 sts.

Beginning with a P row, continue in st-st and work 25 rows.

Shape knee section of skirt

1st row: K13, (K2tog) 4 times, K6, (K2tog) 4 times, K13 — 40 sts.

2nd and every following alternate row: P.

3rd row: K11, (K2tog) 3 times, K6, (K2tog) 3 times, K11 — 34 sts.

5th row: K10, (K2tog) twice, K6, (K2tog) twice, K10 — 30 sts.

7th row: K9, (K2tog) 6 times, K9 — 24 sts.

9th row: K9, (K2tog) 3 times, K9 — 21 sts. Cast off, for waist edge.

Oversew row ends together and turn right side out. For the base cut an 8cm [3in] diameter circle of cardboard, making sure it is rigid as for the standing figures. Push it inside the cast on edge of skirt in same way as for basic standing figure. Stuff skirt through the waist edge, keeping it the same size as base as far as the knee shaping. Continue stuffing but keep the knee shaping section as flat as possible.

Skirt hem

Begin at lower edge and using blue to match skirt cast on 60 sts.

G-st 3 rows. Cast off. Oversew row ends together. Place round lower edge of skirt with seam at back. Sew cast off edge to skirt.

Bodice and head

Begin at waist edge and using blue to match skirt cast on 26 sts. St-st 6 rows.

Next row: K6, K2tog, K10, K2tog, K6 — 24 sts. St-st 3 rows.

Dec for neck

Next row: (K2tog) to end — 12 sts.

Break off blue and join on light pink.

St-st 3 rows for neck.

Inc for head

Next row: K4, inc K wise into next 4 sts, K4 — 16 sts.

St-st 7 rows.

Break off light pink and join on brown for hair.

St-st 2 rows.

Next row: (K2tog) to end — 8 sts.

B & T tightly.

Oversew row ends together and turn right side out. Stuff head, then stuff neck lightly. Stuff bodice. Pin cast on edge of bodice to skirt, with bodice edge just overlapping waist edge of skirt. Make sure also that the oversewn skirt and bodice seams are in line. Sew bodice in place as pinned.

Shape the neck in same way as for the other figures.

Face

Mark the eye positions and work one back-stitch for each eye, as for the other figures. Mark centre of mouth with a pin, 4 knitted rows above the head inc row. Using two strands of red sewing thread, work a small V-shape for mouth with lower point of the V at marked position. Work once again over the first mouth stitches.

Sleeves [make two alike]

Begin at lower edge and using blue to match bodice cast on 16 sts.

G-st 2 rows.

Beginning with a K row, continue in st-st and work 2 rows.

Dec 1 st at each end of next and every following alternate row until 10 sts remain. St-st 15 rows.

Next row: (K2tog) to end — 5 sts. B & T tightly.

Make up and sew sleeves to bodice as given for the other figures. Using light pink add hands as for the other figures also, but push them a little further inside the sleeves. Bend arms at the elbow position and catch hands to skirt as shown in the illustration.

Head-dress

Begin at top edge and using white cast on 8 sts.

1st row: K2, inc K wise into next 4 sts, K2 — 12 sts.

Begin shaping

1st row: K2, P to last 2 sts, K2.

2nd row: K3, m1, K to last 3 sts, m1, K3 — 14 sts.

Repeat these two rows until there are 50 sts.

St-st 14 more rows, but K the first 2 sts and last 2 sts on every P row as before.

G-st 4 rows, then cast off.

To block the knitted piece

Wet the piece thoroughly, then squeeze out excess moisture in a towel. Fold the piece, bringing front g-st edges together. Pin these edges to an ironing board covered with a towel, stretching the inc shaping rows slightly. Leave to dry. Place on the figure as illustrated. Catch to head and sides of face. Catch ends of cast off edge to skirt hem.

Manger

Long sides and base

[knitted in one piece]

Use double yarn in two different shades of brown. Begin at top of one long side piece and cast on 18 sts.

G-st 18 rows. This completes one side piece.

Commence base

Beginning with a K row, st-st 13 rows.

This completes the base.

Commence other side piece

G-st 18 rows, then cast off.

End pieces [make two alike]

Use double yarn as before. Begin at top edge and cast on 12 sts.

★ G-st 4 rows.

Next row: K1, K2tog, K to last 3 sts, K2tog, K1 — 10 sts.

Repeat from ★ — 8 sts.

G-st 6 more rows, then cast off.

To make up

Oversew the cast off edges of end pieces to row ends of the st-st base as shown in the diagram. Now bring the adjacent row ends of long side pieces and end pieces together as shown by the arrows in the diagram. Oversew them together on the outside.

Straw piece

Using light yellow cast on 30 sts and st-st 30 rows.

Cast off.

With P side of st-st outside oversew row ends together leaving a gap at centre of seam. With this seam at centre of cast on and cast off edges, oversew across these edges. Stuff lightly but leave a hollow depression at centre of the stuffed shape. Oversew gap in seam. Place in manger with seam against base.

Baby

Body

Using white begin at lower edge and cast on 8 sts loosely.

1st row: Inc K wise into every st — 16 sts.

Beginning with a P row, st-st 13 rows.

Next row: (K2tog) to end — 8 sts.

B & T loosely.

With K side of st-st outside, oversew row ends together for centre back seam.

Push a little stuffing inside. With seam at centre of cast on edge, oversew across cast on sts.

Head

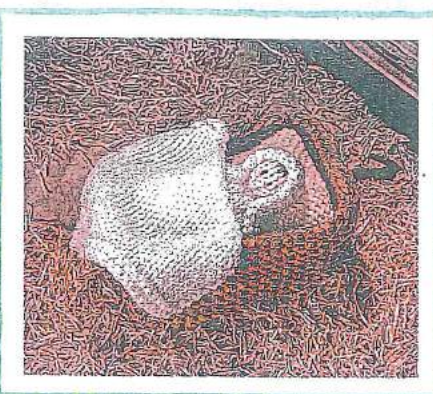
Using light pink cast on 5 sts and st-st 6 rows for neck.

Next row: Inc K wise into every st — 10 sts.

Beginning with a P row, st-st 5 rows for head. B & T loosely.

With K side of st-st outside, oversew row ends together. Stuff head, then pull up length of yarn tightly at top of head and fasten off.

Push the neck right inside B & T sts of the body, matching seams on both pieces. Pull up length of yarn tightly and fasten off.



Mark eye positions with pins, 3 knitted rows above inc row, placing pins at centres of adjacent sts. Split a length of black yarn to get a finer strand, then work a tiny vertical back-stitch at each eye position. For hair, use brown and work three small stitches on forehead, starting at gathered top of head.

Head covering

Begin at face edge and using white cast on 22 sts.

1st row: K10, inc K wise into next 2 sts, K10 — 24 sts.

Beginning with a P row st-st 4 rows and dec 1 st at each end of every row — 16 sts.

Next row: P4, (P2tog) 4 times, P4 — 12 sts. Cast off.

Fold cast off edge in half and oversew across cast off sts.

Turn right side out. Place on baby's head and catch ends of cast on edge to body at front.

Place baby in the hollow on straw piece.

Blanket

Using white cast on 24 sts and g-st 2 rows. Beginning with a K row, st-st 12 rows, but K the first 2 sts and last 2 sts on every P row.

Commence shaping

Continue in st-st, keeping the two K sts correct at beginning of all P rows only.

Dec 1 st at beginning of every K row and end of every P row until 9 sts remain.

G-st 2 rows, then cast off.

Note that the shaped edge is the top edge of blanket.

Place blanket over manger as illustrated. Catch to the straw piece and to sides and end of manger.

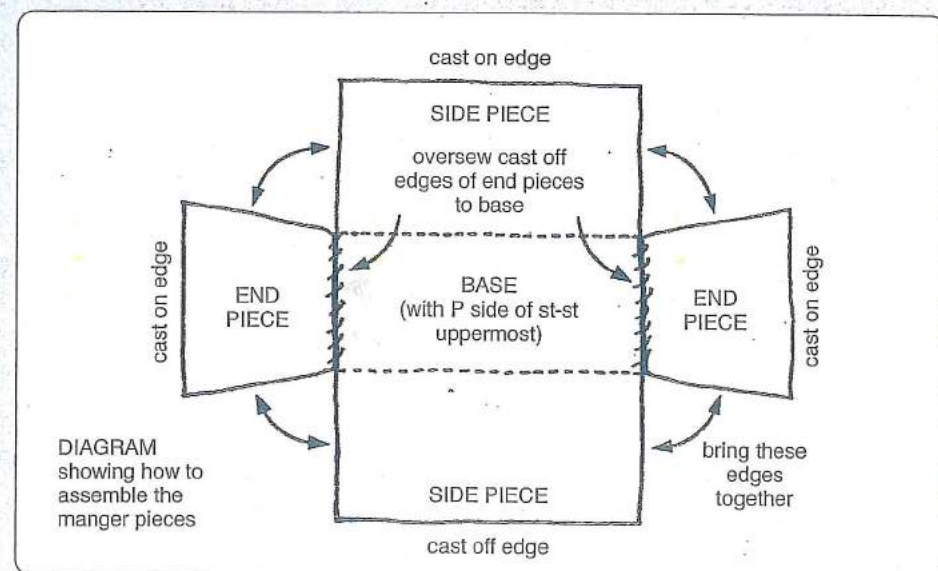


DIAGRAM showing how to assemble the manger pieces