

Chain Stitch Binding

This bookbinding method was inspired by the Sewn Chain method in Keith A. Smith's second book.

SUPPLIES:

- 10 sheets, letter size paper, cut and folded to make one 20 sheet signature that is 4 ¼" x 5 ½" when folded. Option 1: Signature fore edge may be trimmed before binding if desired. Option 2: before cutting sheets in half take off progressively more from long side in 1/16" increments. First two sheets are full 8 ½", next two are 8 7/16", next two are 8 6/16", next two are 8 5/16" and last two are 8 4/16".
- 2 pieces chipboard (2mm) or other sturdy board cut to 4 ½" x 5 ¾"
- 1 strip Book cloth measuring 2" by 13"
- 2 pieces Cover paper - 5" x 8"
- 2 pieces decorative paper for inside of cover – 4 x 5 1/2"
 - Awl
 - Beeswax
 - Bone folder
 - Book cradle
 - Cutting mat
 - Embroidery needle
 - Screw punch with 1 mm bit
 - Paper trimmer
 - PVA or YES glue and brush
 - Removable Tape (blue painter's tape)
 - Ruler
 - Scissors
 - Utility Knife
 - Waxed linen thread (3-4 ply)
 - Waxed paper
 - Weights
 - White gel or chalk pen (optional)

1. Cut and fold papers making one large signature – place under weight
2. Position the two boards on top of the book cloth with a 7/8" gap between the two boards and then glue the cloth to the boards, maintaining the 7/8" gap and keeping the top or bottom edges of the book evenly aligned. Draw a line on the chipboard and glue the book cloth up to the edge of the line (ex. on the front cover, draw a line approximately ½ inch from the left side of the board and glue the book cloth a tad over that line. For the back cover, draw a line approximately ½ from the right side of the chipboard and glue the spine a tad beyond this line, maintaining the 7/8" gap between the two boards. See picture below.
3. Create punching template with holes every ½". Make sure to mark the top.
4. Using blue tape (or other means) determine where cover papers should be placed on both covers as they are covering the book cloth. Glue front cover down, flip and do the turn in pieces. Do the same for other cover. The covers are going over the book cloth and the goal is to have them equidistant from the spine on both sides. Put under weight for a few minutes.
5. Glue decorative pieces to the insides of the covers. Put under weight for a few minutes.
6. Mark and punch holes into signature. Make sure the holes go all the way through. It may be easier to punch the sheets in stacks of 10 rather than doing all 20 at once.

7. Using gel pen or chalk marker and punching template mark placement of holes on spine. Holes should run down the center of the spine. Allow space at the top and bottom as the book case is a bit taller than the signature. Using awl or smallest screw punch bit (1mm), make the holes. They need to actually be there! Don't be too aggressive as the cloth can tear.
8. Sewing (this is the daisy chain stitch in embroidery)
 - Thread needle with about 30" of thread. Wax first if not using waxed linen thread.
 - Start from inside signature at top hole and exit to outside. Leave about 3" tail inside.
 - Go back through the same hole to the inside but leave a little loop outside.
 - Go down to second hole and exit to outside through signature and cloth spine.
 - Pass needle through loop previously created and go back inside through the 2nd hole (the one you just came out). It doesn't matter if needle goes right to left or left to right - just be consistent as each stitch is made.
 - Tie off the tail that is still loose. Use a double knot and pass thread under a stitch to keep it neat.
 - Go down to third hole and exit to outside. Pass threaded needle under the previous stitch and go back into hole just exited.
 - Go down to fourth hole and exit to outside. Pass threaded needle under previous stitch and go back into hole just exited.
 - Keep repeating this until at the last hole. After needle is inside tie a double knot and run thread under previous stitch and snip off.

Overnight place waxed paper between covers and text block and on top and bottom of book and place under weight. This will help the signature flatten and will also aid the covers in their drying.

Options: More than one signature can be put into a book this way. It is a sturdy binding so the pages may be larger than used here. There is another way to start the chain stitch but this seems the most common. General suggestion is this style binding not be more than 1" thick. Book repair tape (comes in various colors) has been used for the spine cloth. Duct tape has also been used.



Picture to go with bullet #2.
Note 7/8" spacer in place



Picture to go with bullet #8.