Felt

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I F YOUR Christmas budget won't stretch far enough, use your imagination instead. What you need is a bag of felt scraps, a needle and thread and some good ideas to make many welcome Christmas gifts.

Your materials will be inexpensive because many companies sell bags of felt scraps very reasonably. Buy yarn, sequins, colored beads, buttons and pearls and you're ready to begin.

Gay collars

Start with your roommate. With just a couple snips of the scissors, you can make a collar or dickey. Use one of your own for a pattern, then vary it by adding scallops or points. Add a felt flower or two plus some sequins or pearls for sparkle, and your gift is ready for wrapping. Since felt is not a woven fabric, you won't even have to turn the edges under. Just cut it out and there you are!

Draw-string bags

Coin purses or draw-string bags of brightly-colored felt are eye catchers that are useful. You might want to look at a purse of your own to see how the pieces fit together. Cut out your material and sew the seams on the sewing machine. Since the cut edge of felt is smooth, the seams can be turned either to the inside or outside depending on the effect you want to create. For outside decoration, let your imagination take the lead. Your decorations tell your friends the gift is from you, and you alone.

Felt aprons

Felt aprons appliqued with sequin-decorated Christmas trees, holly leaves and Santa Clauses are welcome gifts for mothers, aunts or newly-married friends. They'll all be cheery hostesses when they wear your apron Christmas Day.

Personality pillows will add life to any dorm or recreation room. This item, too, is limited only by your own ideas. These pillows can be made to look like anything from the round face of a clock with numerals and hands to a big slice of watermelon with deep green rind, bright pink melon, and black seeds. Any shape or size is fine—the more original the better.

To make a watermelon, all you have to do is cut out the shape you want, sew the black seeds on the pink melon, and seam the melon and rind leaving a hole just big enough to put in the stuffing. After you've stuffed, sew up the rest of the seam and there is your pillow with a personality all its own.

Christmas stocking

If small fry dot your Christmas list, how about making a bright red Christmas stocking to hang above the fireplace? You can decorate your stocking with Christmas trees, teddy bears and circus tents made out of felt or sequins and beads. A pair of bright suspenders will add a party look to any little girl's full skirt or little boy's new pants. Try cutting these with pinking shears for a varied effect.

While you're in the mood and having so much fun, try decorating a larger piece of felt to lay around the base of your Christmas tree. Buy a yard or two of red, green or white felt. Cut out various felt figures and sew them on. You might try a manger scene, Santa Claus and his eight reindeer or gaily-decorated Christmas trees. Now you have the perfect setting for family fun around your Christmas tree.

Study your Christmas list again. Look at all the people who will be pleased with gifts of felt. So sit down with your bag of felt scraps, a needle and thread and you'll have fun solving your Christmas gift problems.