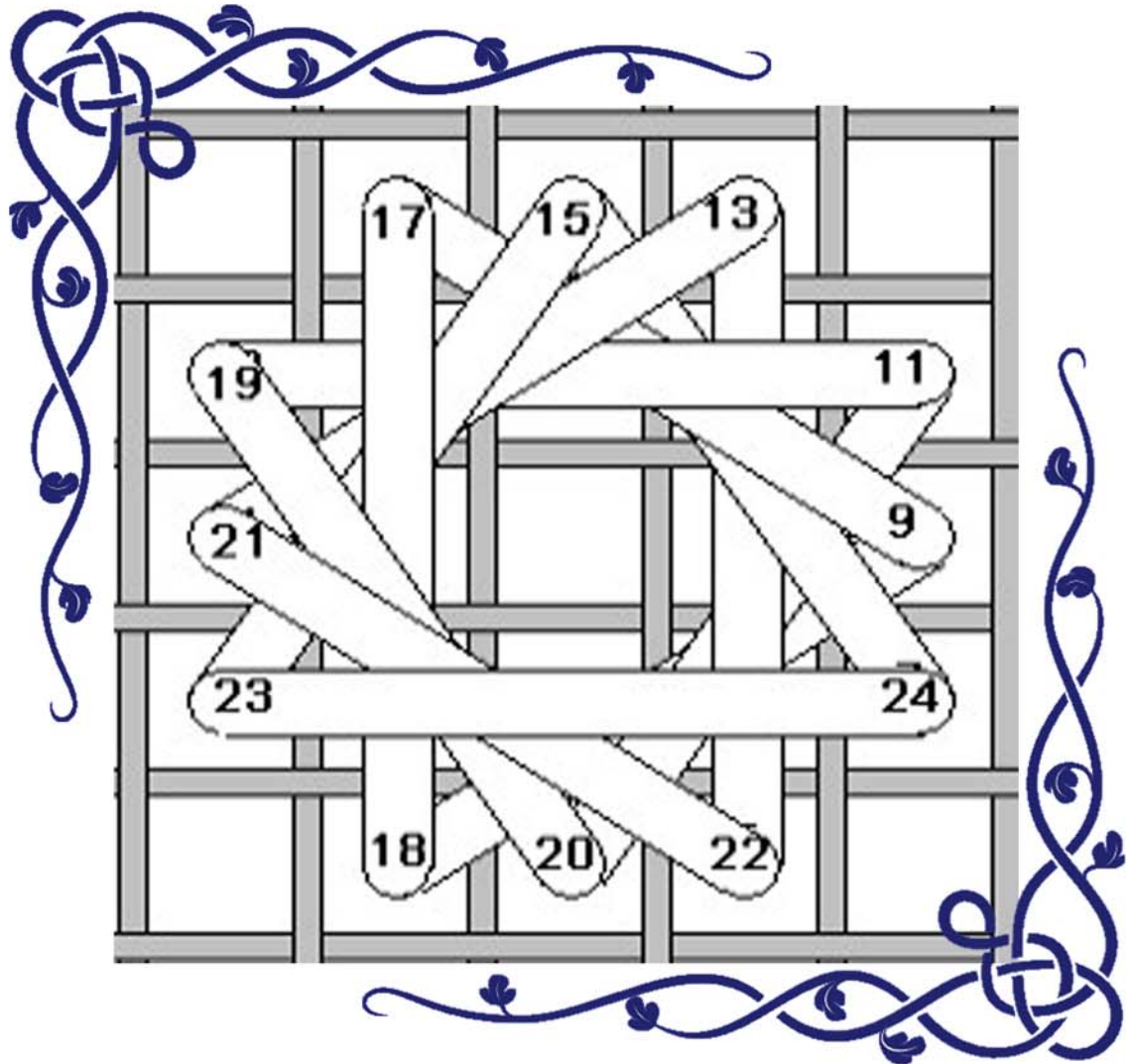


Northern Expressions Needlework



The Jessica Stitch

Specialty Stitch Tutorial #5

Northern Expressions Needlework, Port Dover, Ontario, Canada
NorthernExpressionsNeedlework@gmail.com

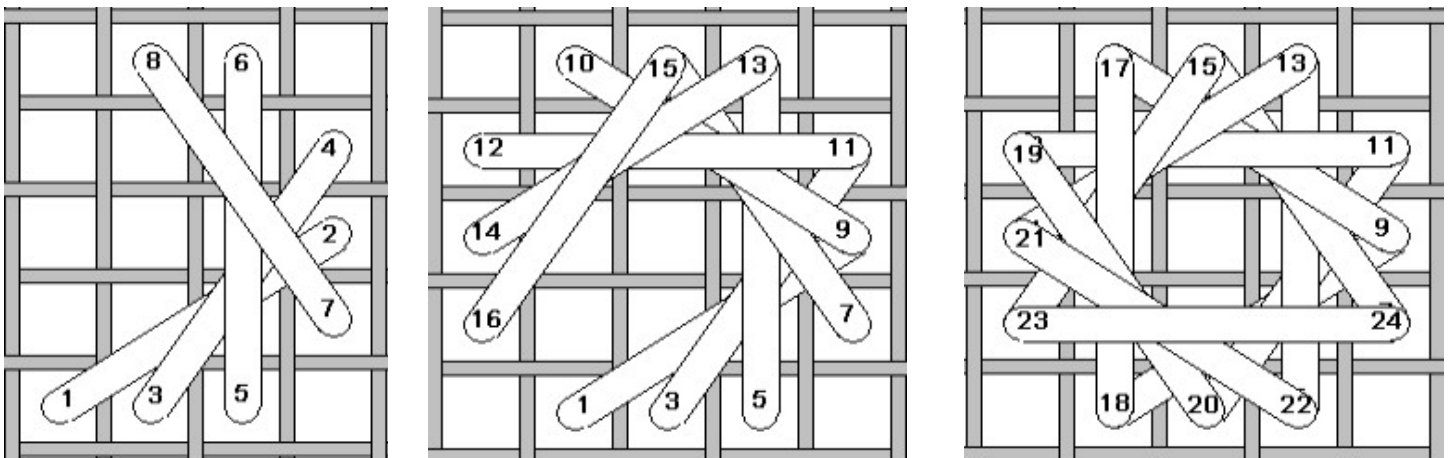
Specialty Stitch Tutorial #5 – The Jessica Stitch

I'm in love with Jessica stitches. They are an extremely versatile stitch that can be done in a myriad of shapes, sizes and styles. They can be beaded, or layered, or made into flowers, bands or focus stitches.

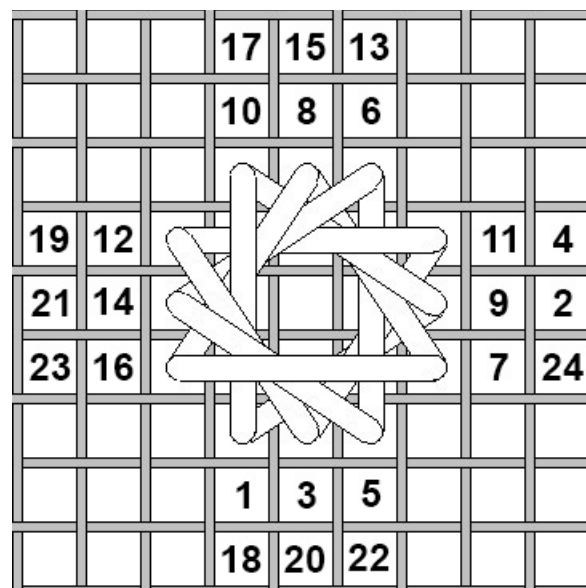
The basic execution of the stitch is much like a Rhodes stitch, with the legs starting on the outside and working around a central fixed point. The main difference is that the legs, rather than crossing over that fixed point, are offset so as to leave the centre of the stitch open.

Starting and ending the stitch is much the same as starting and ending a Rhodes stitch as well. You can leave a tail and anchor it with the next few legs of the stitch, use an away waste knot, or bury the start under a few previous stitches – whatever works well for you. Since I often bead these stitches, I start the stitch with my bead and secure it with the cross stitch that holds that bead in place. Most of the time, you'll bead before you stitch – it can be a real pain trying to get at the holes you need to secure the bead after the stitch is already in place.

Okay, so with that, let's try a very simple Jessica Stitch – we'll look at some with beads later on, but for now, let's just start simple with a Jessica Stitch over 4 threads. There are two ways to show diagrams for these and I tend to use both depending on the design and how much space I have to work with in the instructions. The first is to show the stitch broken into steps – because you'll be using each hole twice, the later legs cover the earlier ones, so I show them in 3-4 steps so you can see each leg individually.

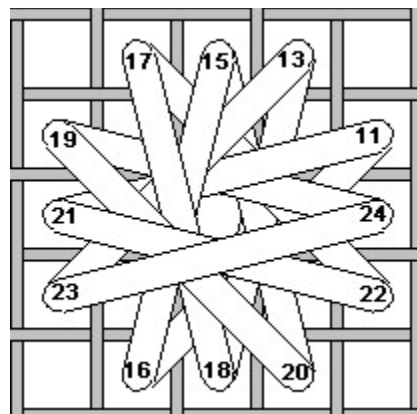
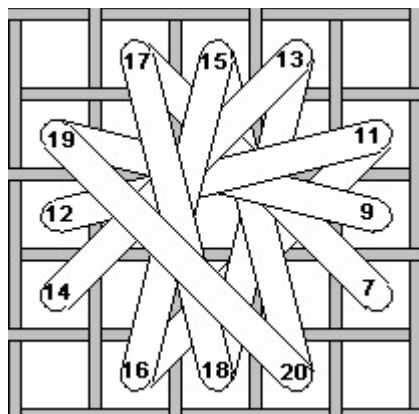
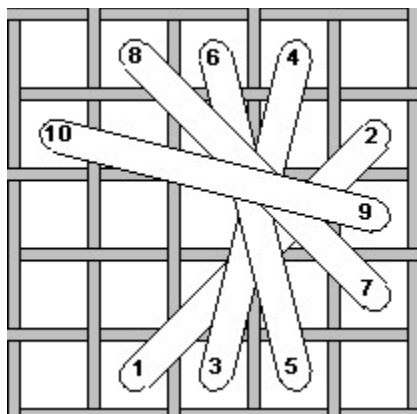


Seems pretty straightforward right? To give an example of the other style of diagram I use, here is the same stitch with the alternate diagram:

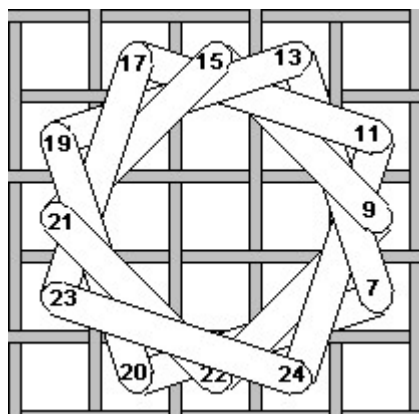
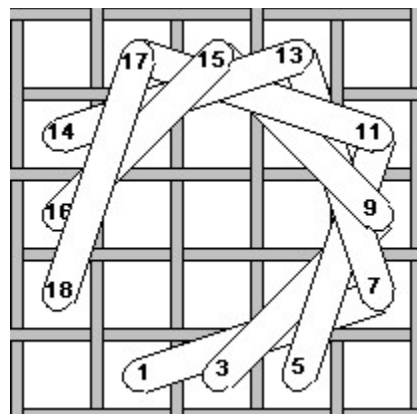
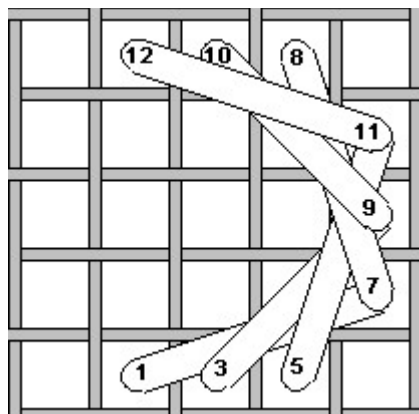
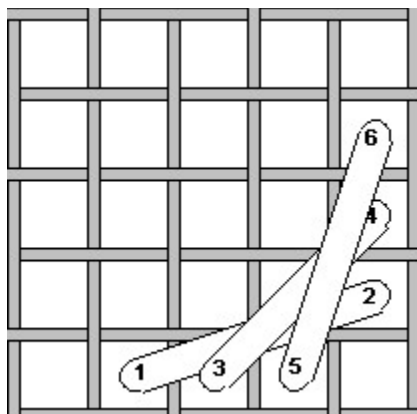


For the purposes of the tutorial, I've done the diagrams in the broken down style since space is no problem! lol

As I mentioned previously, you can modify the style of the stitch by simply changing the angle of the legs. For example, here is another example of a Jessica Stitch over 4 threads:

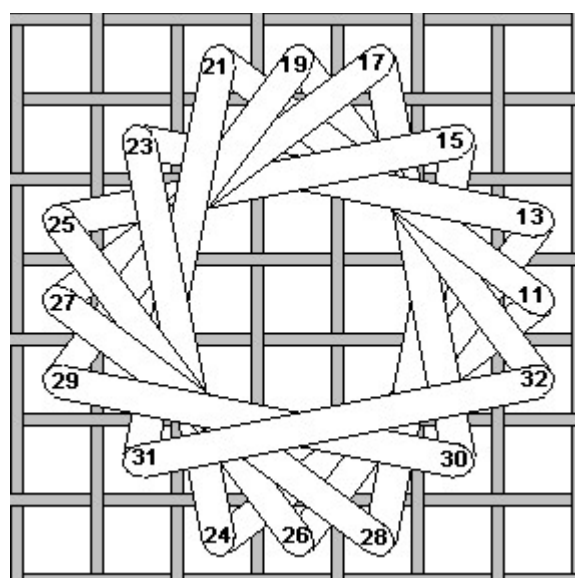
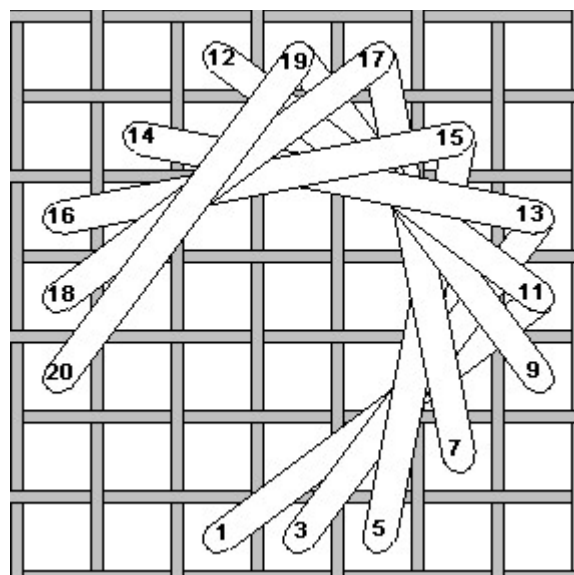
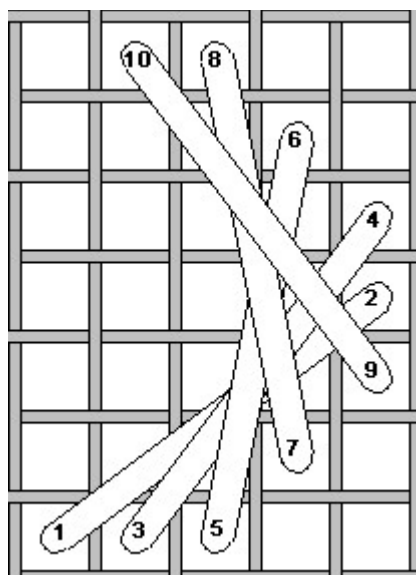


As you can see, by making the legs at a steeper angle, we close off the centre of the stitch. We can widen it too by making a shallower angle:

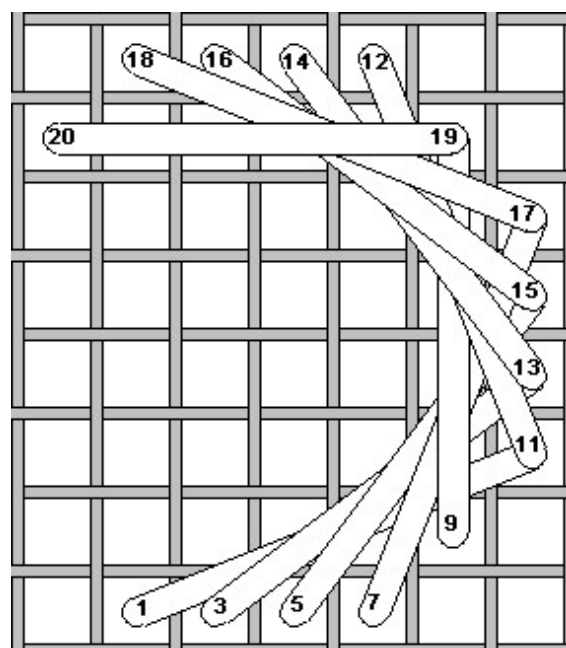
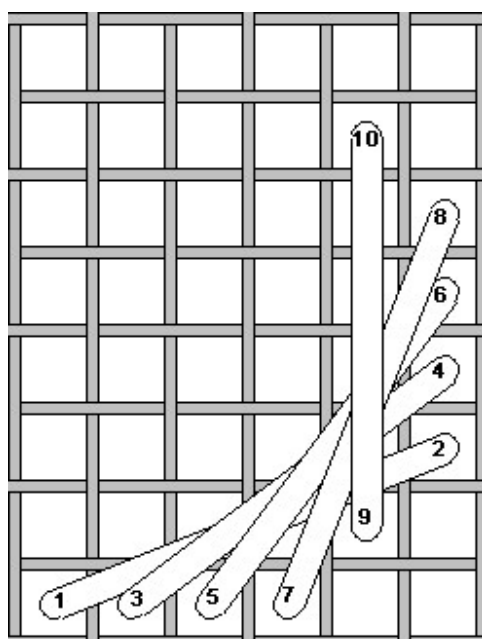


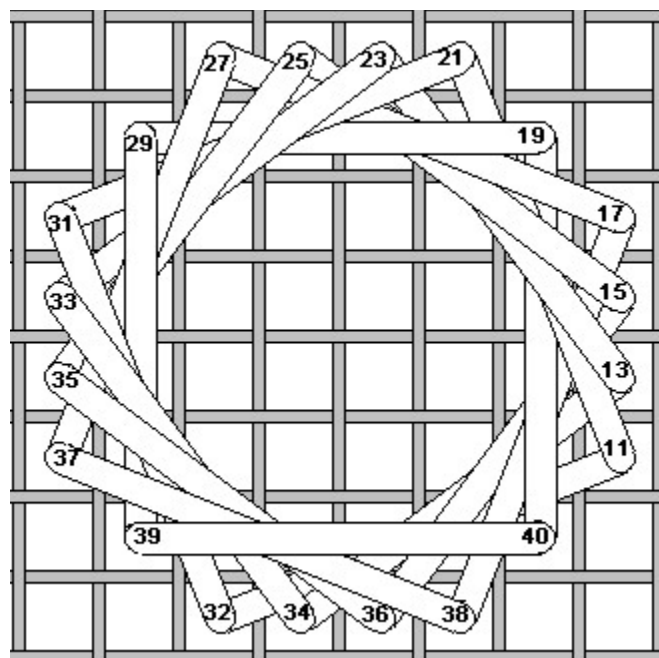
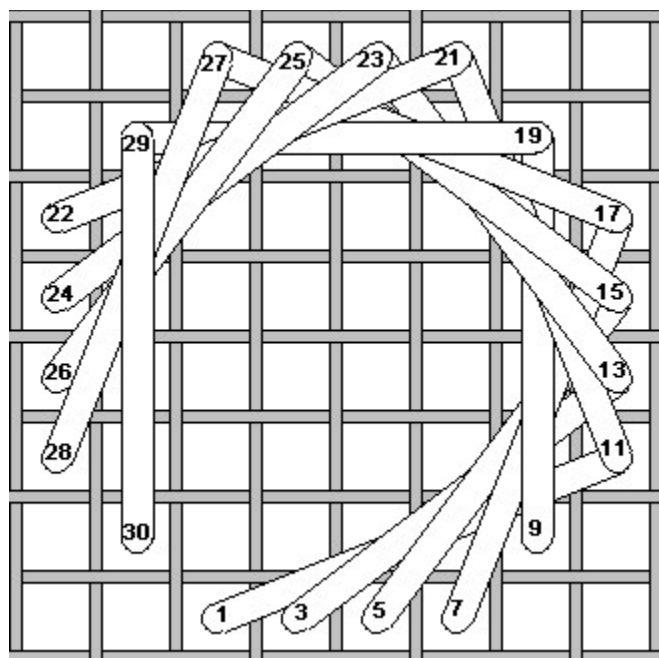
Same sized stitch, just a different finished effect! :)

Of course we can also alter the size of these stitches. So far, all the examples we've done are over 4. But how about over 6? Sure, why not?

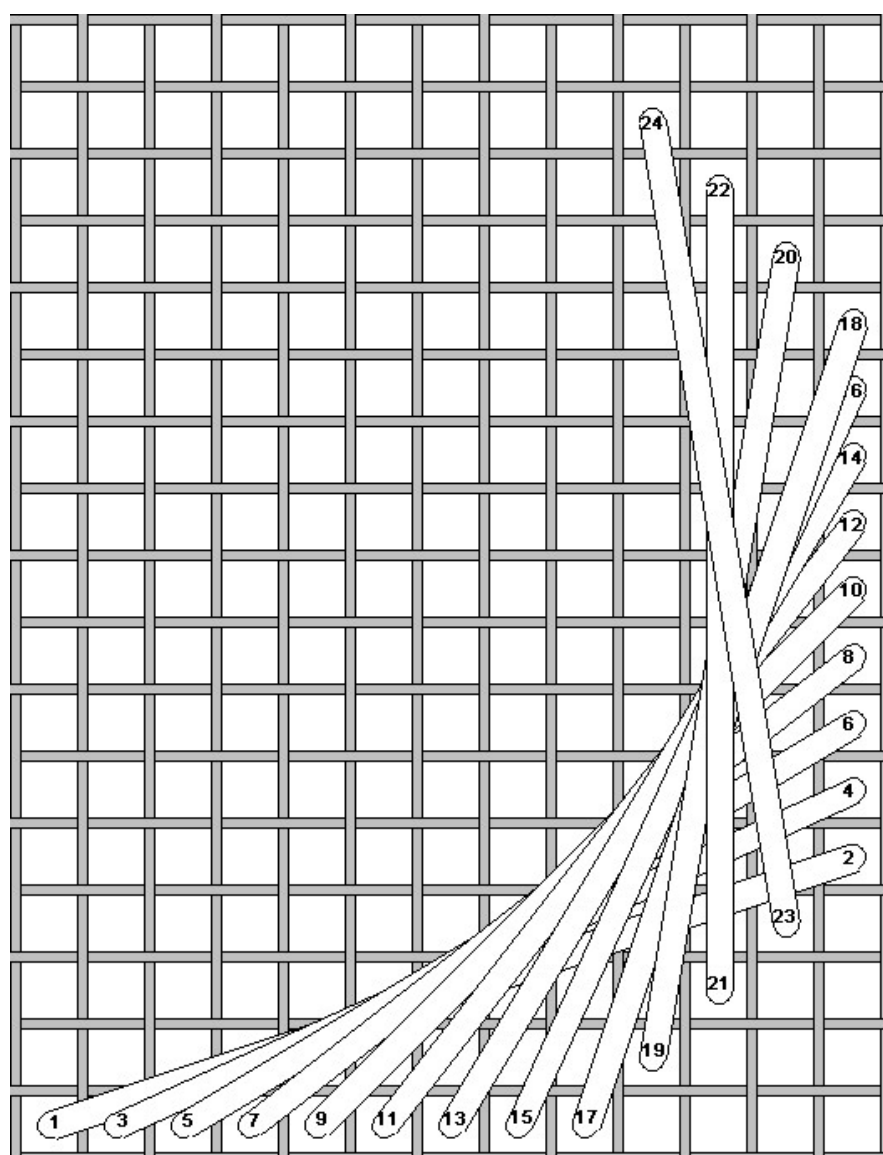


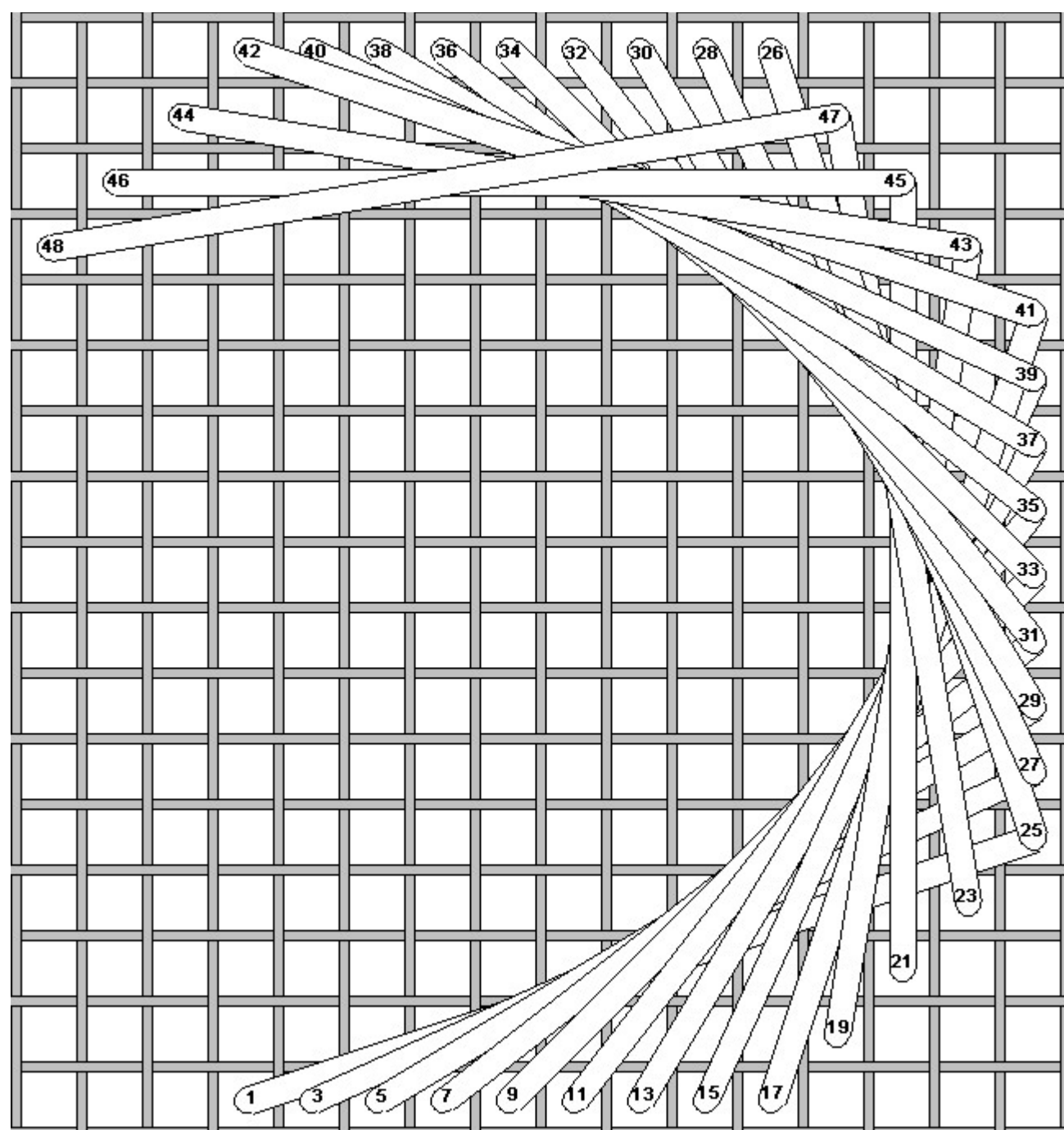
Over 7?

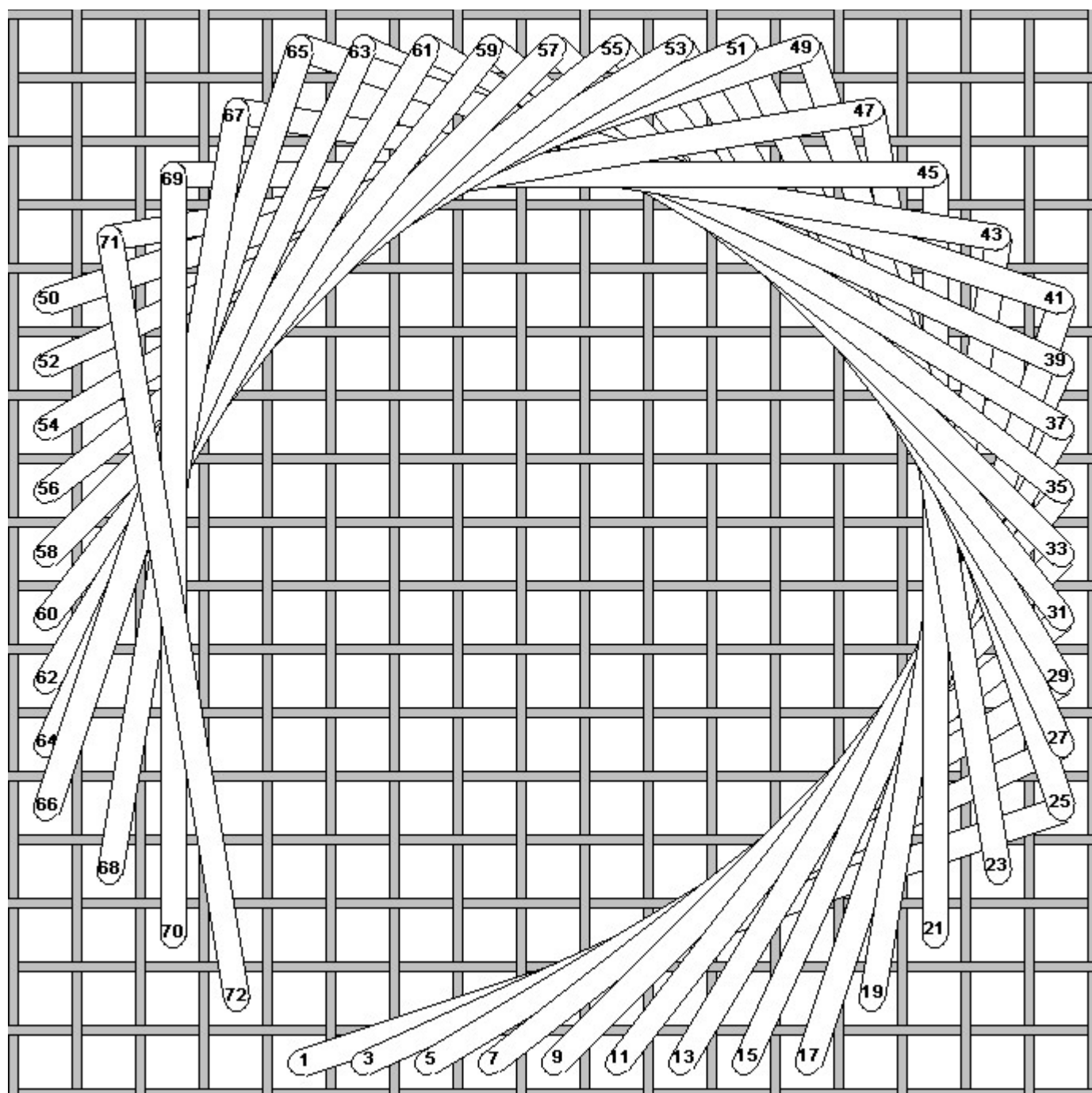


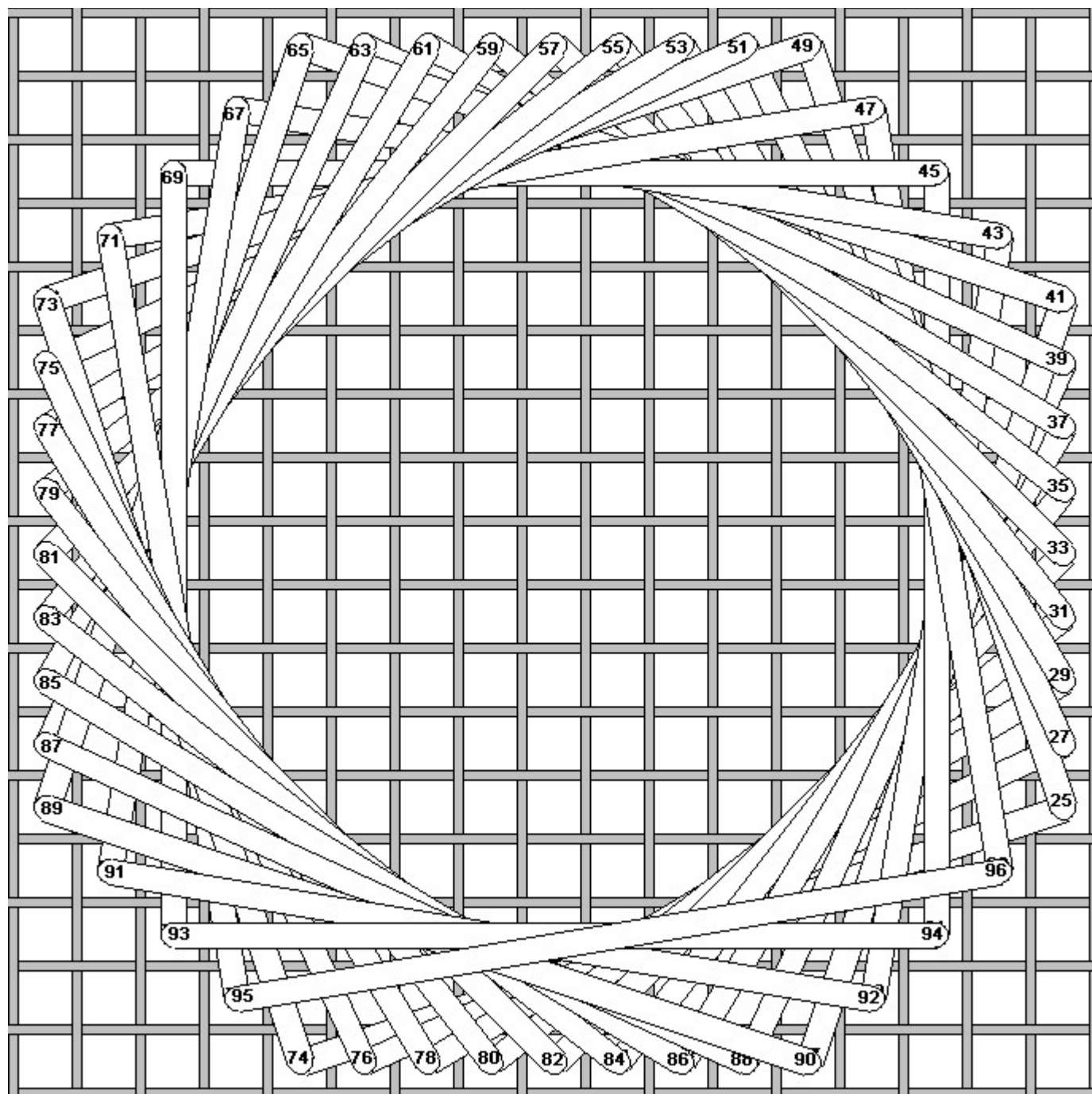


Over 16?

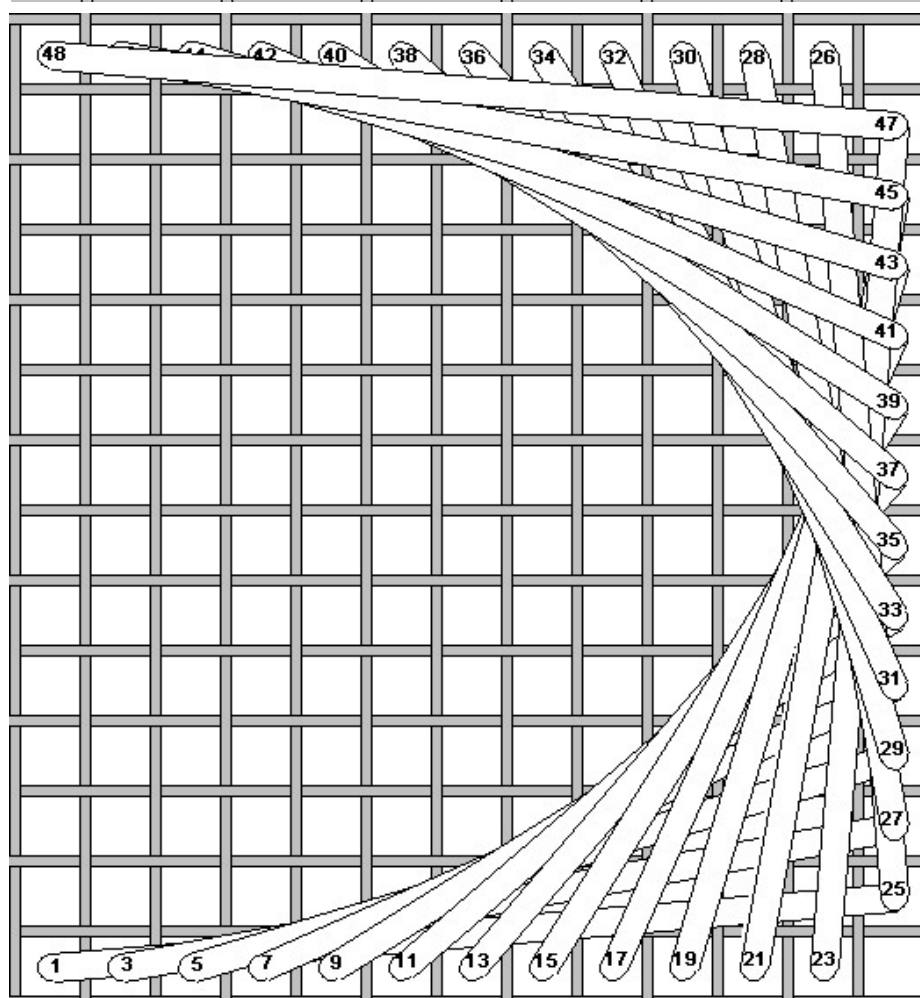
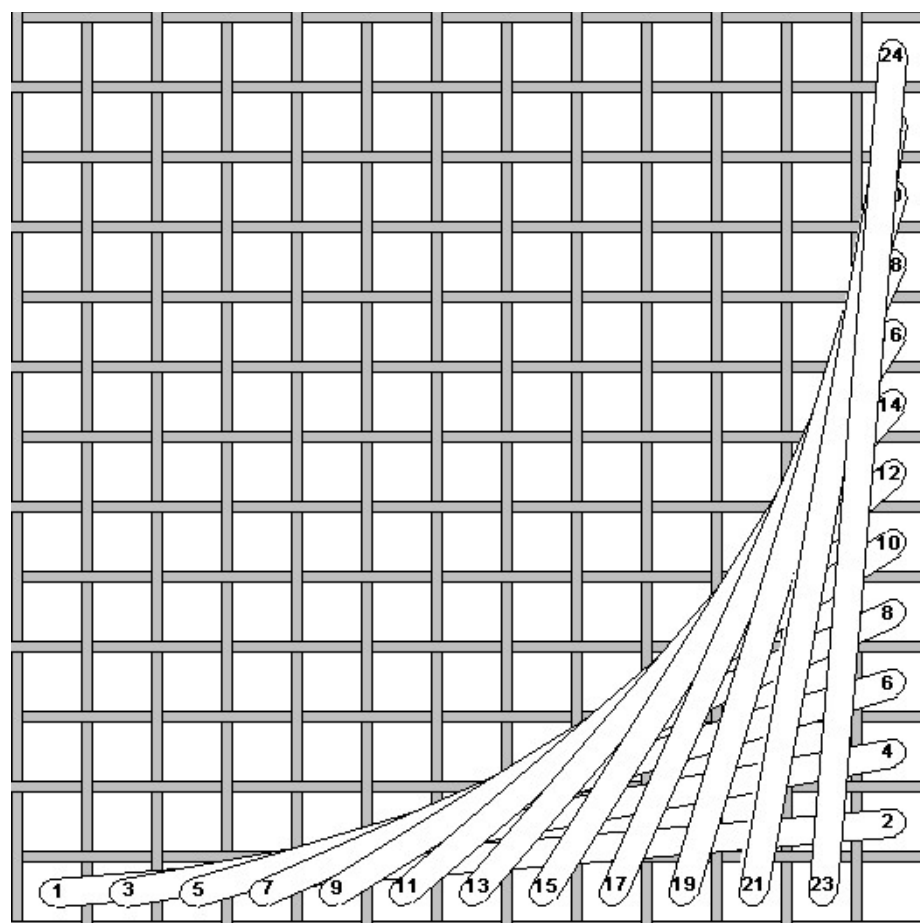


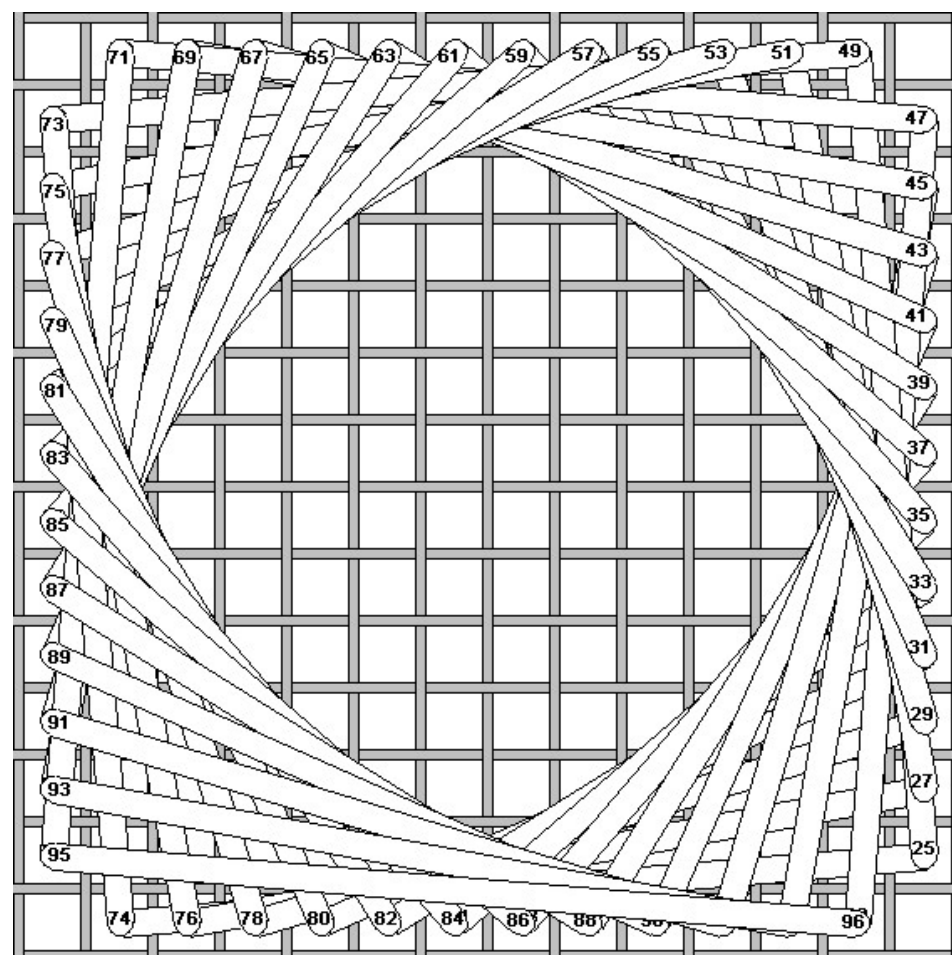
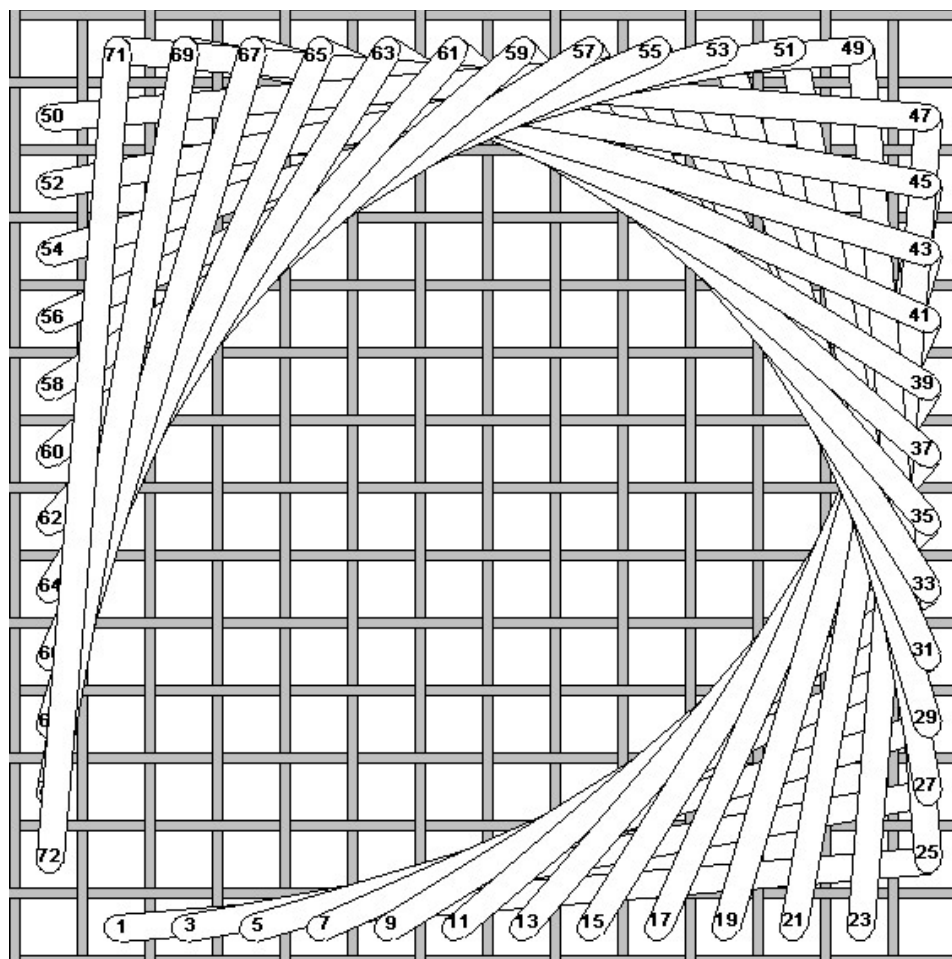




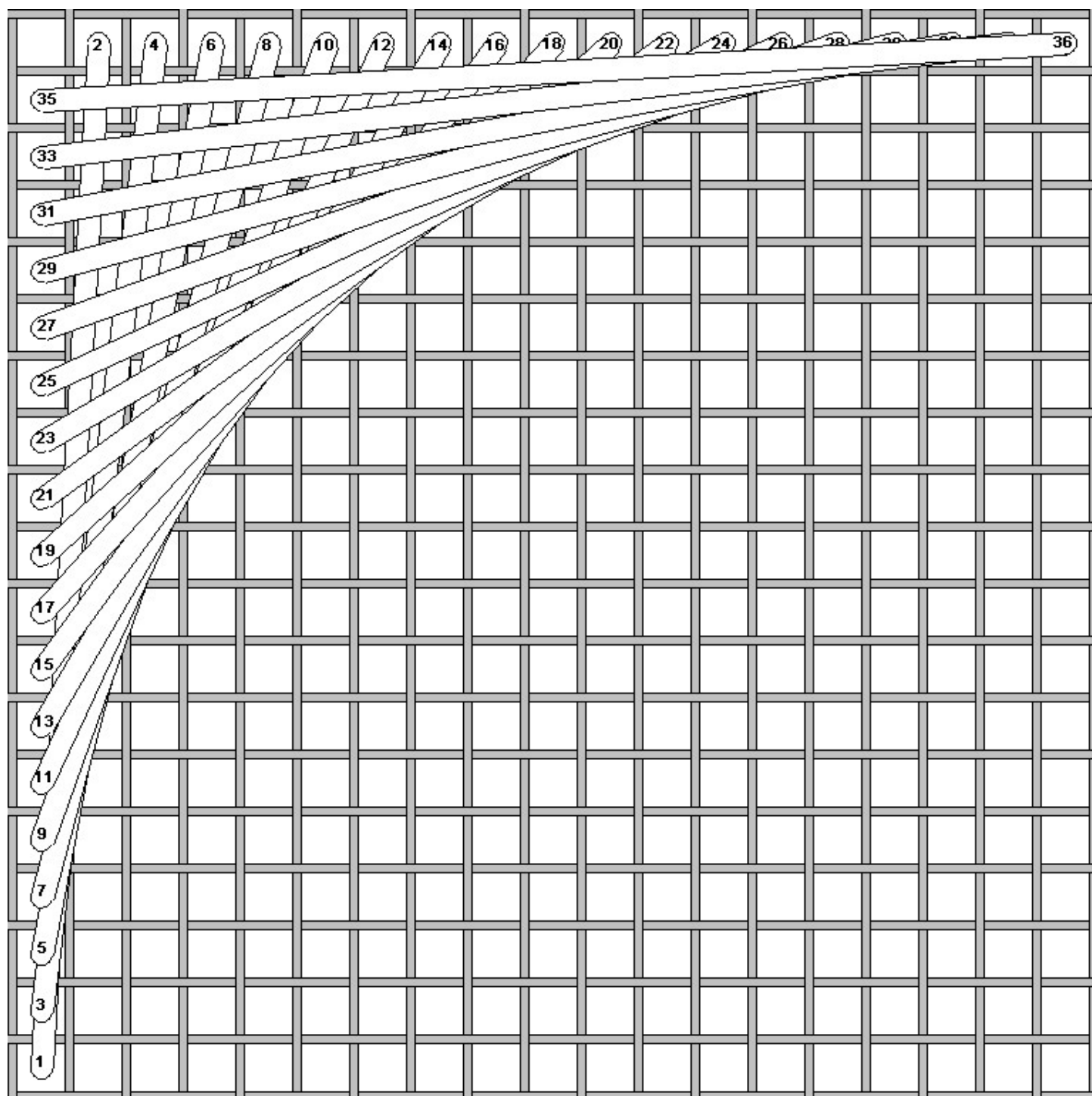


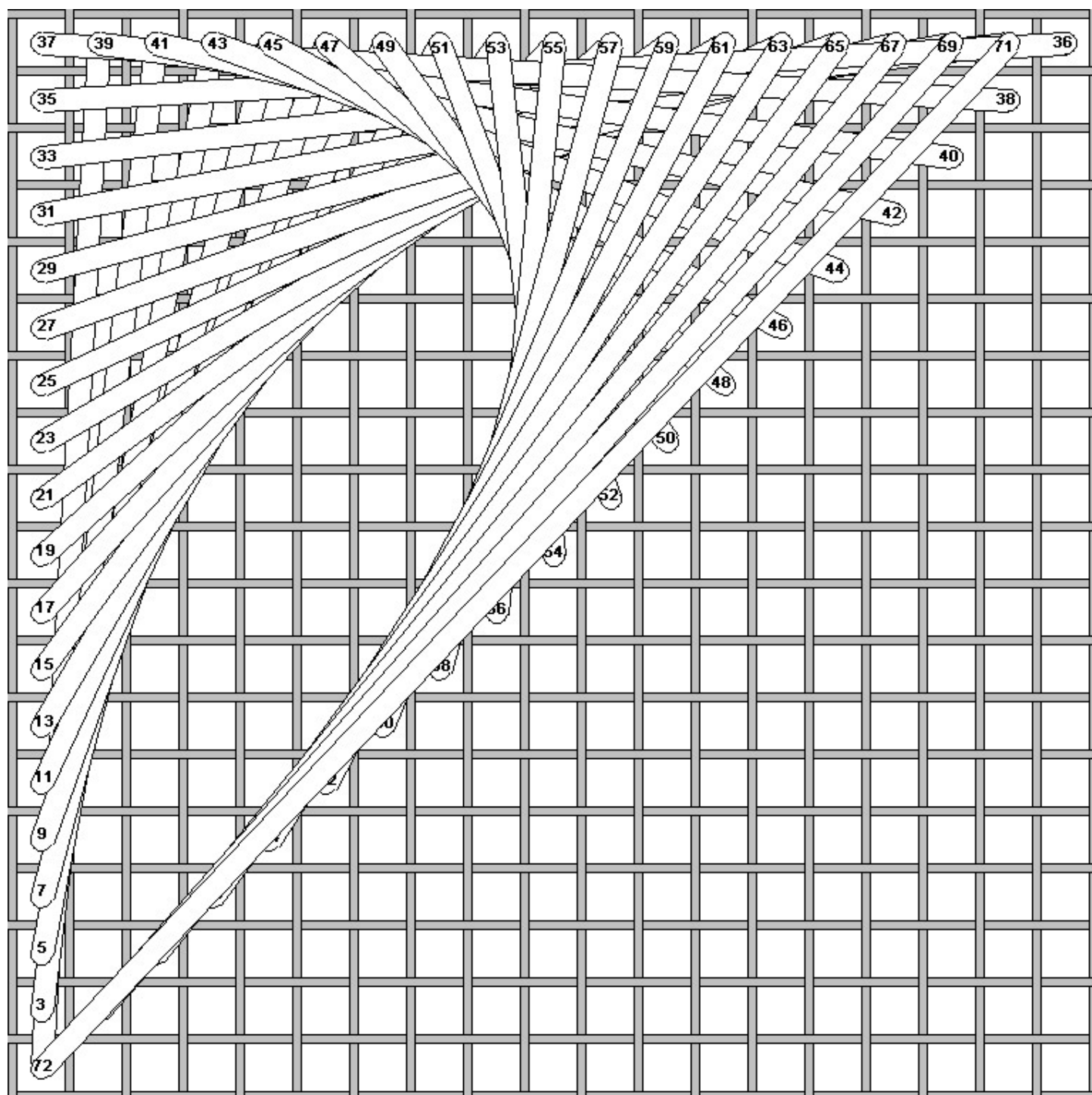
Phew! That was a big one. You can make these as large or as small as you want them really. But do they have to be round? Of course not. Let's try a square over 12!

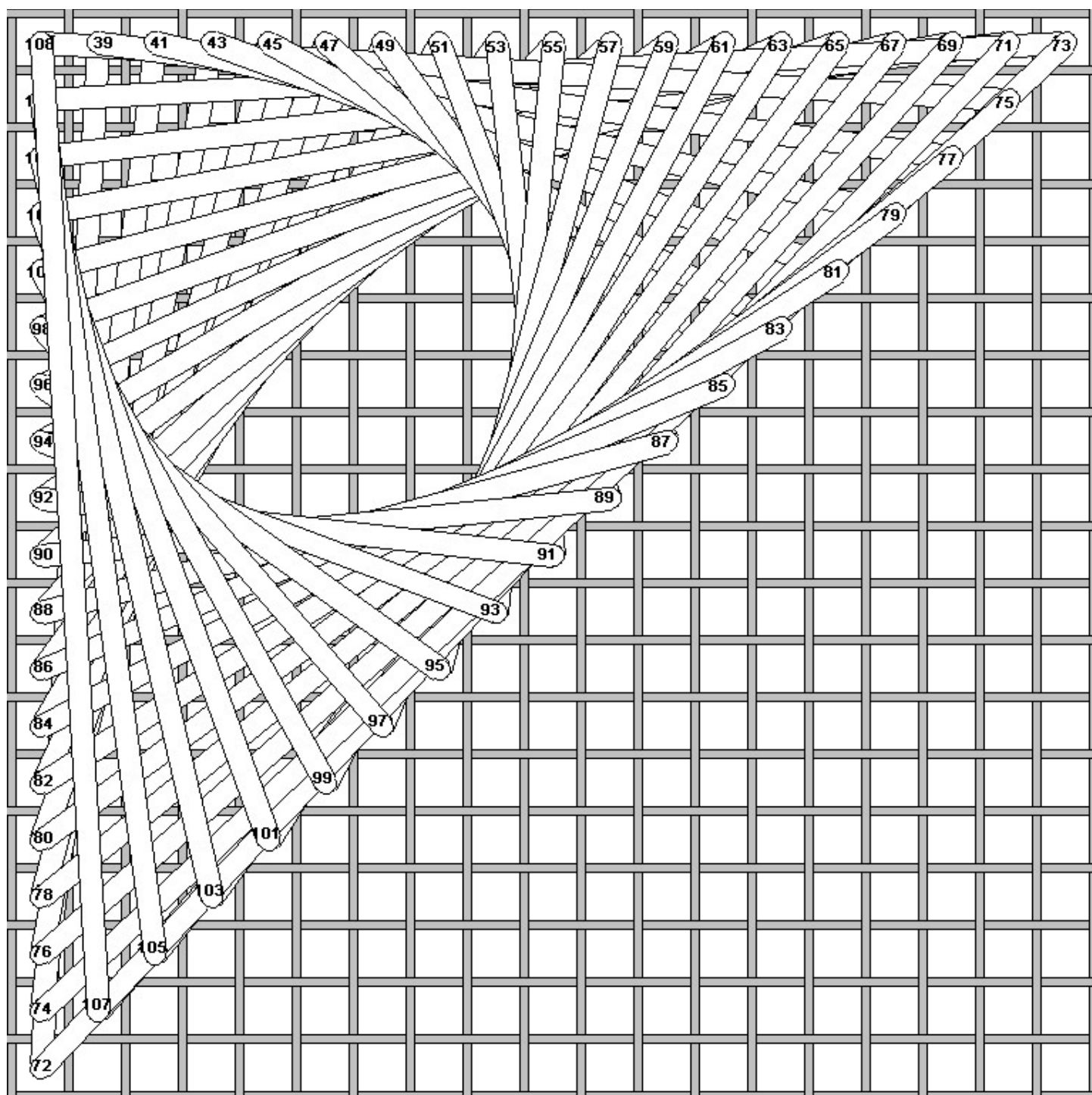




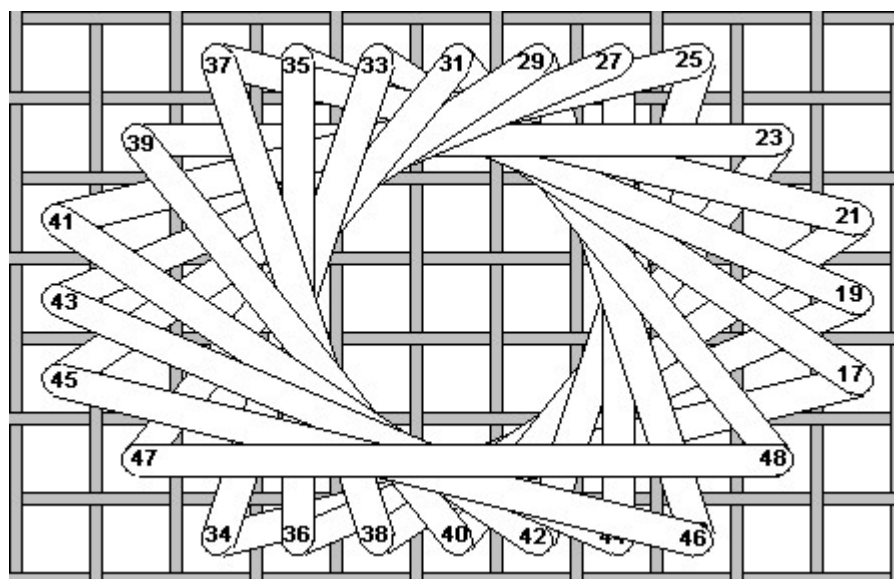
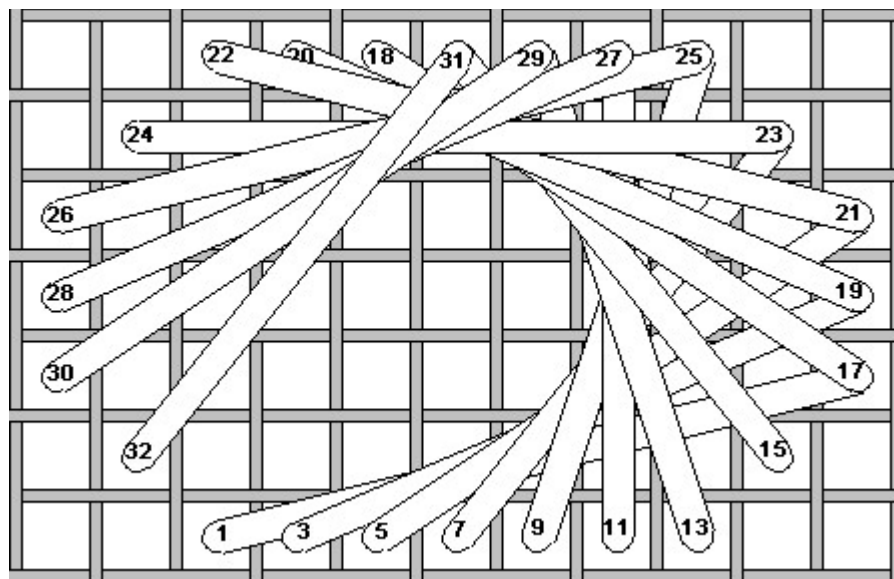
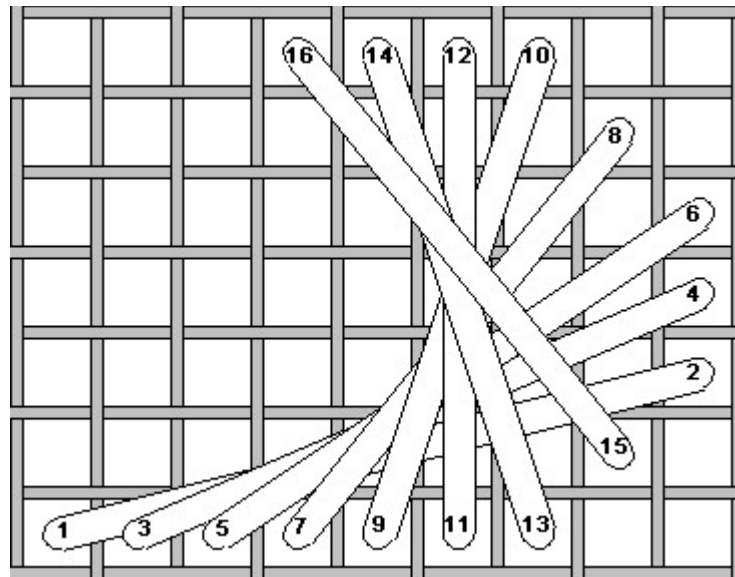
Or a triangle over 18?



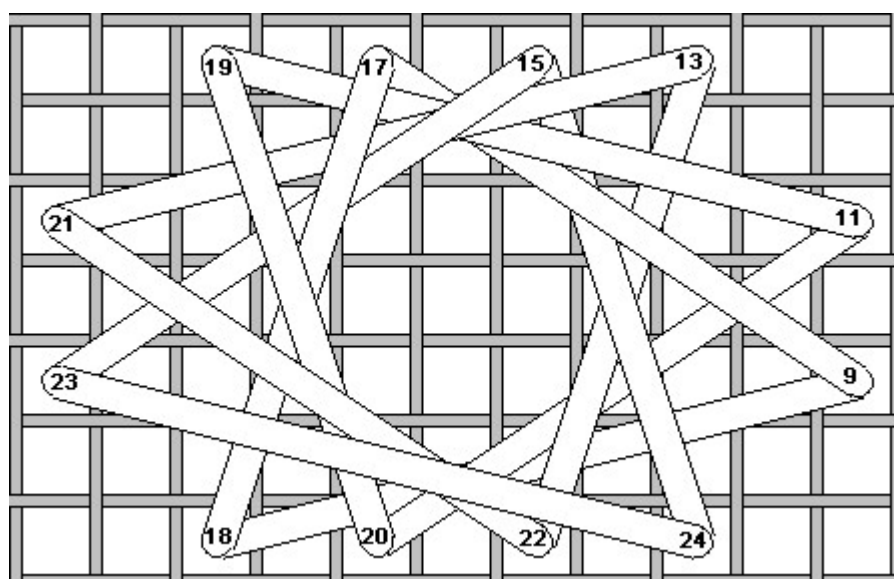
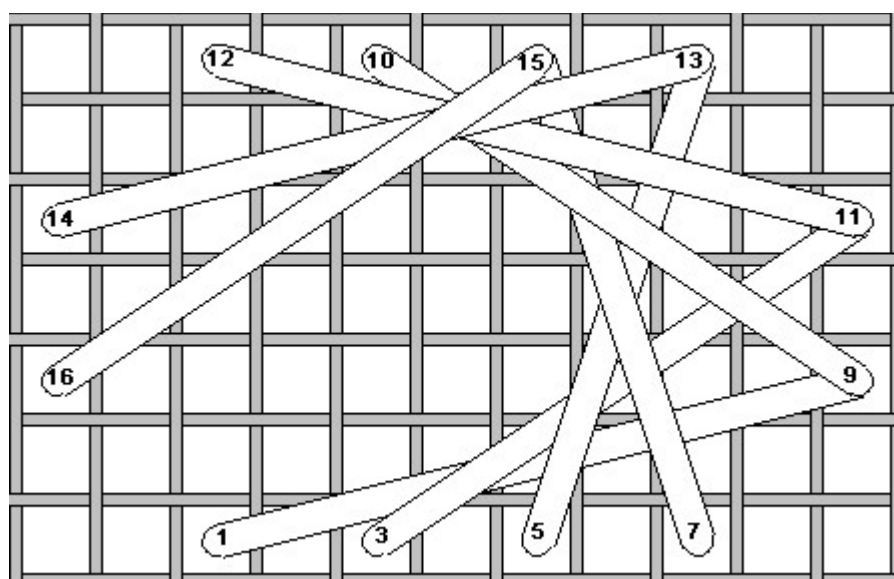
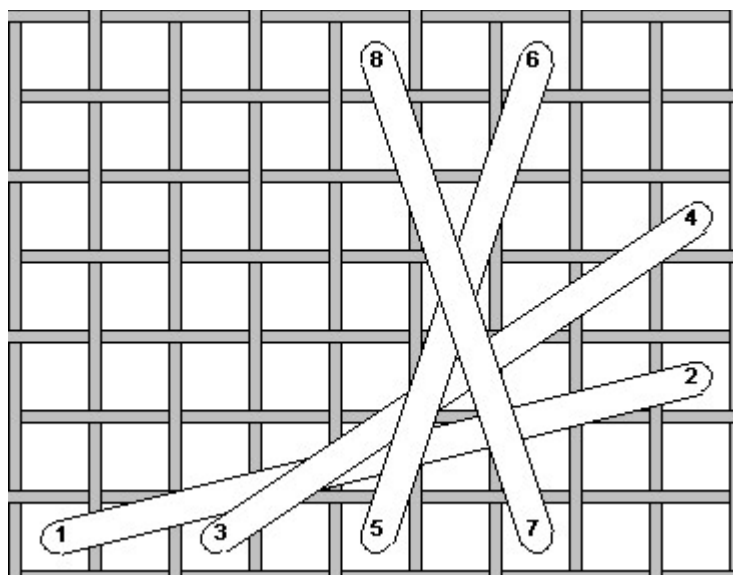




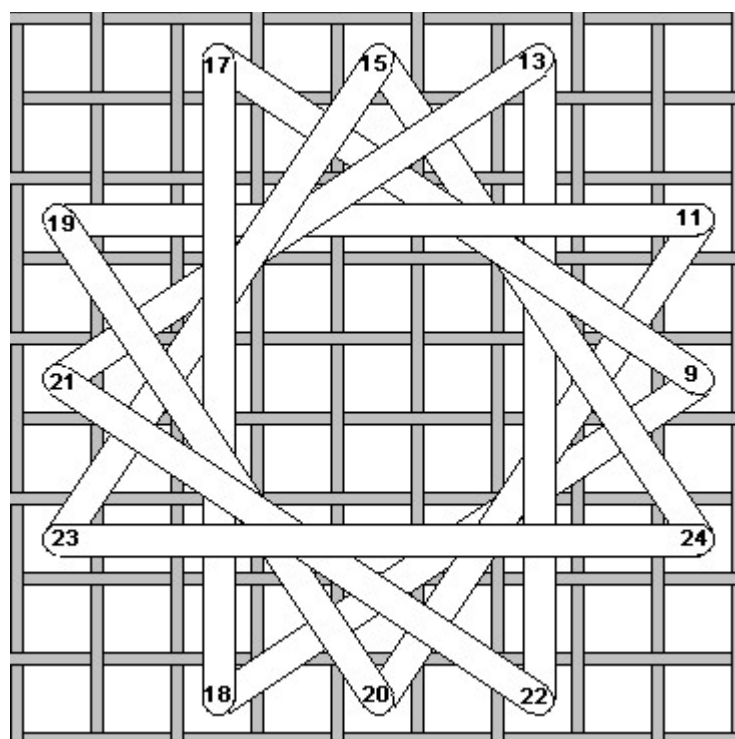
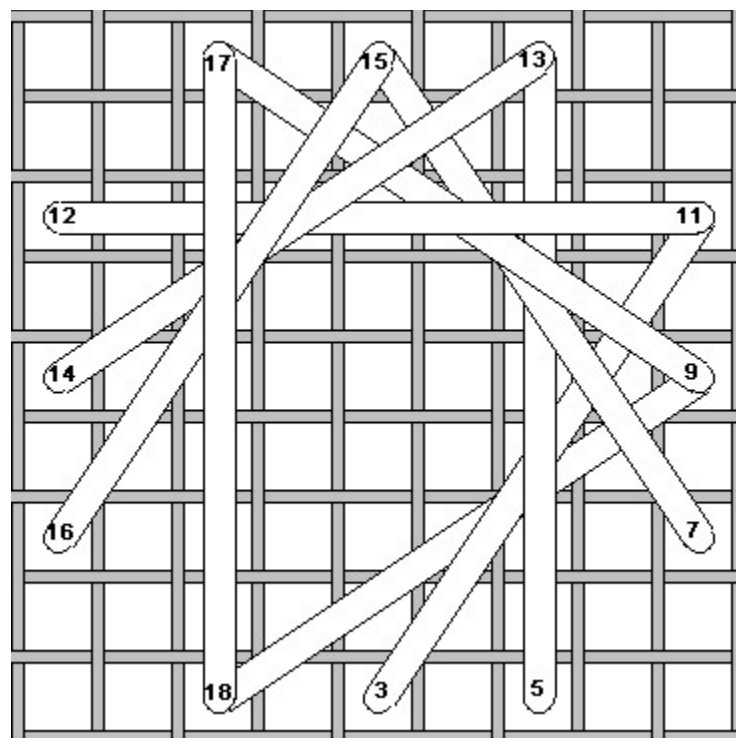
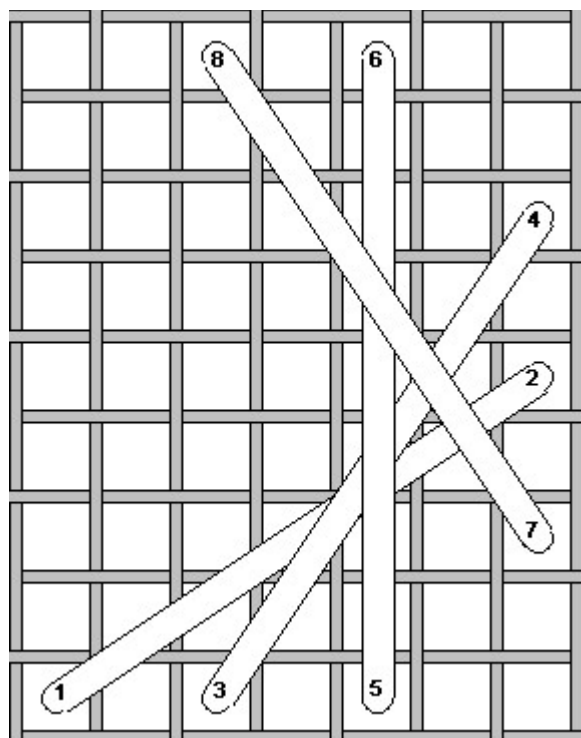
Oval 10 threads wide by 6 threads high? Sure. That works too.



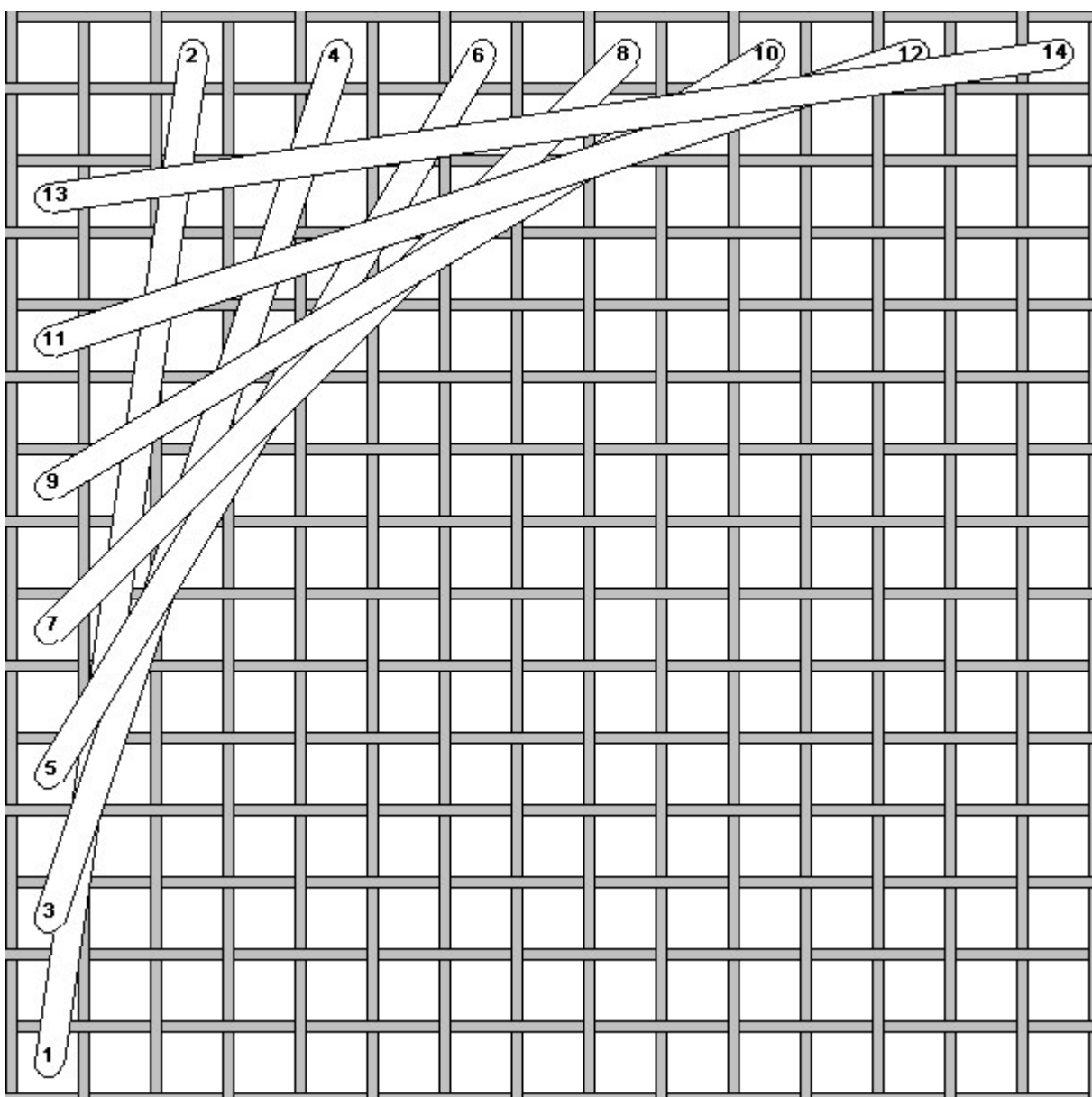
And of course all those shapes can be varied by size as well. So far all the Jessicas I've shown use every hole of the fabric. But we can vary that too and use every other hole. Let's look at that 10x6 oval again, but this time we'll use every other hole.

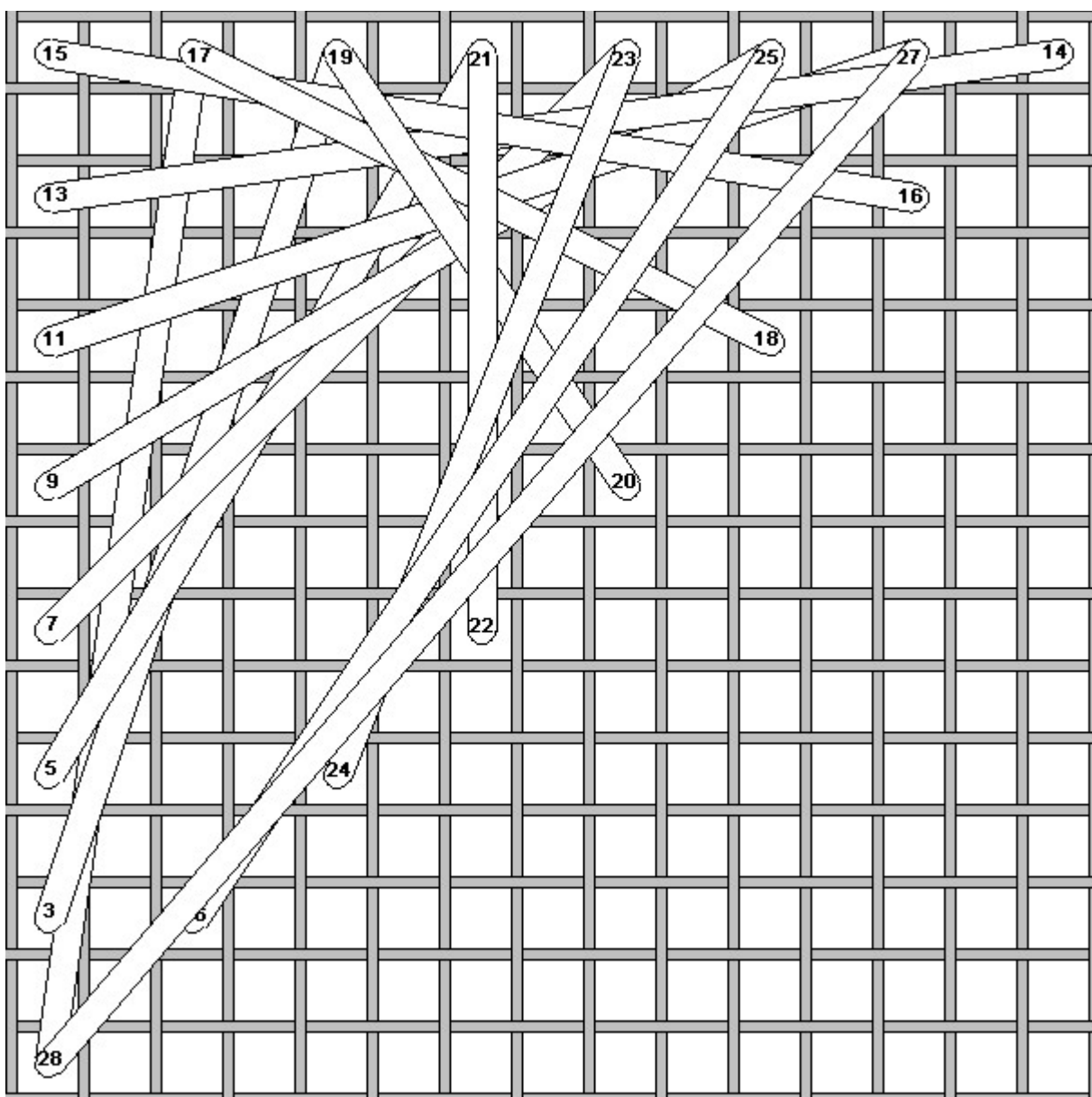


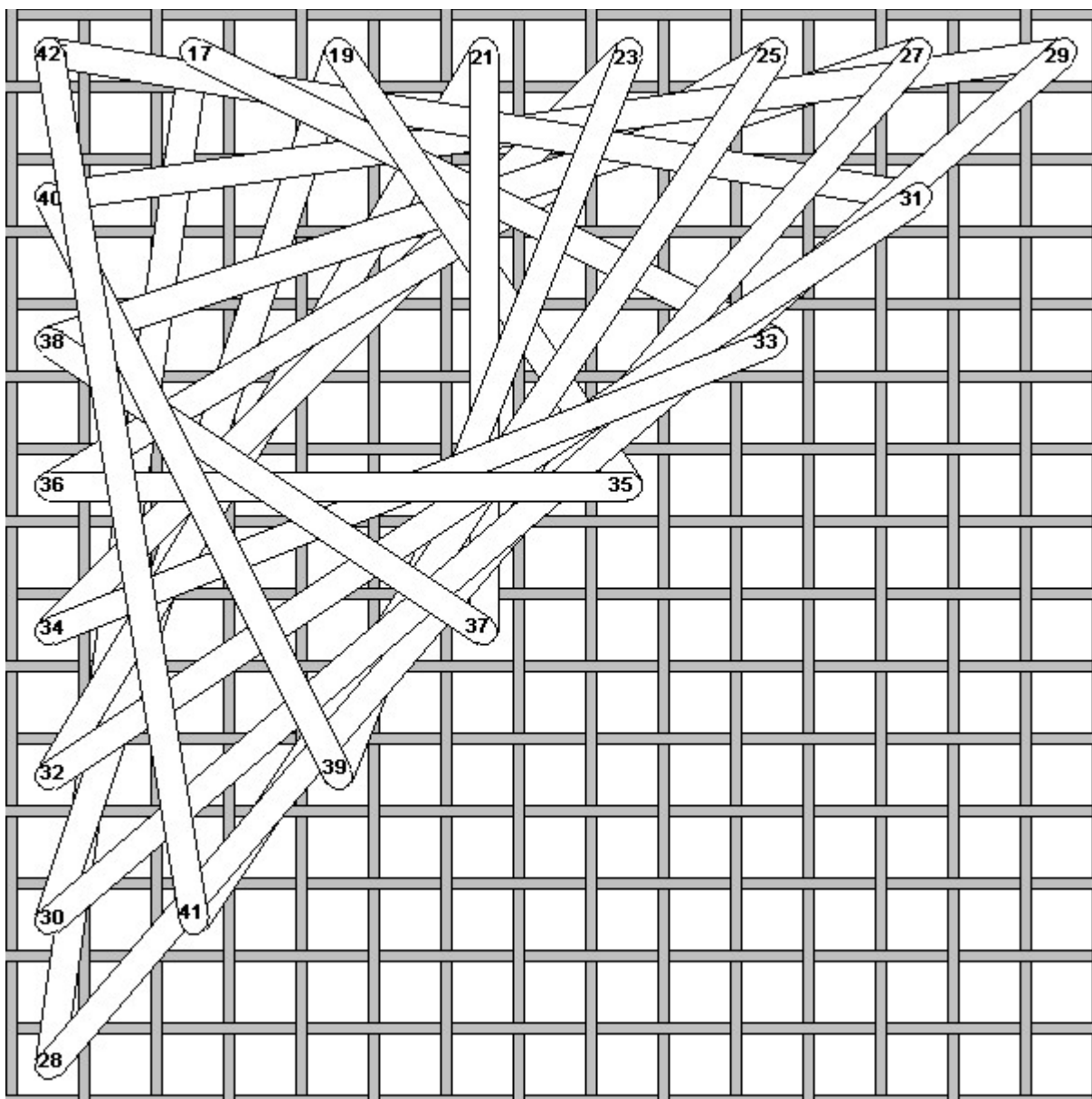
That works for other shapes as well, like this round stitch over 8 threads:



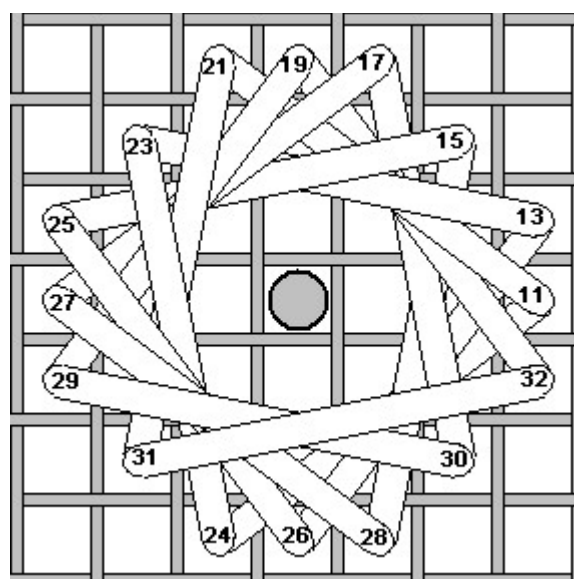
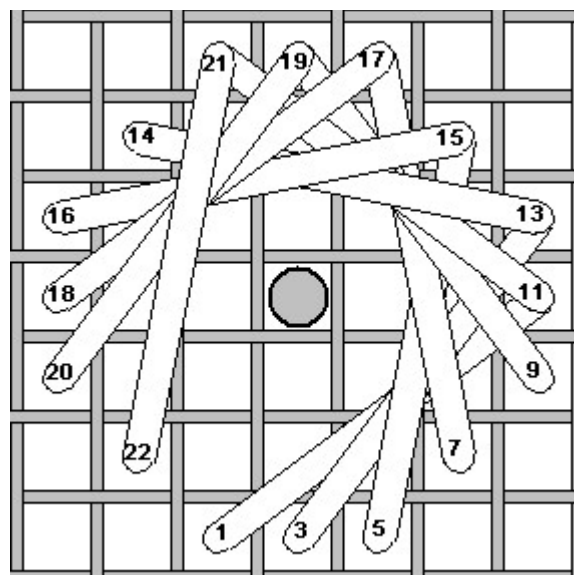
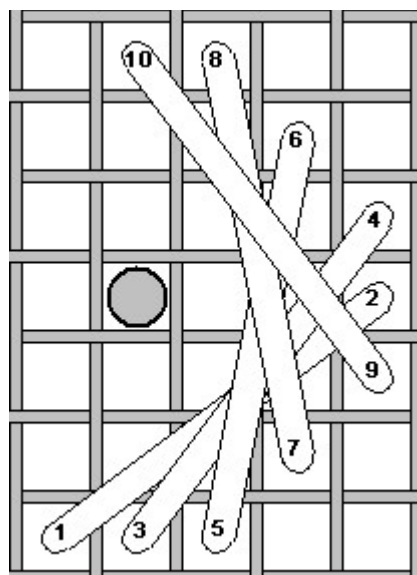
Or this triangle over 14.



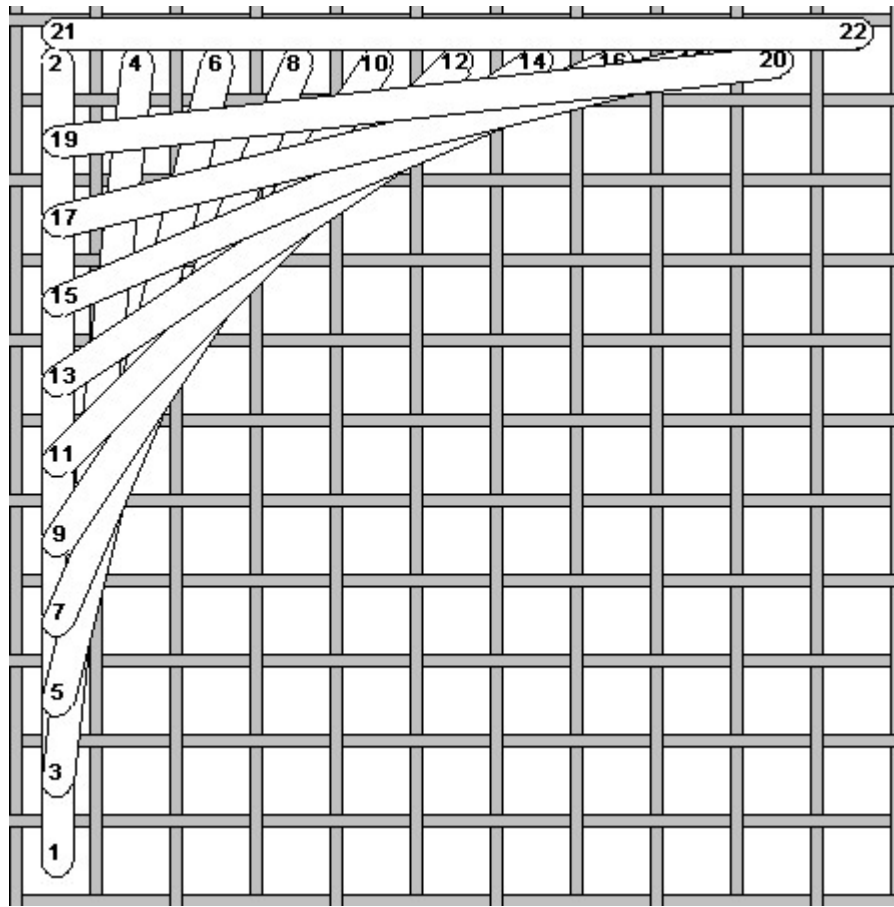




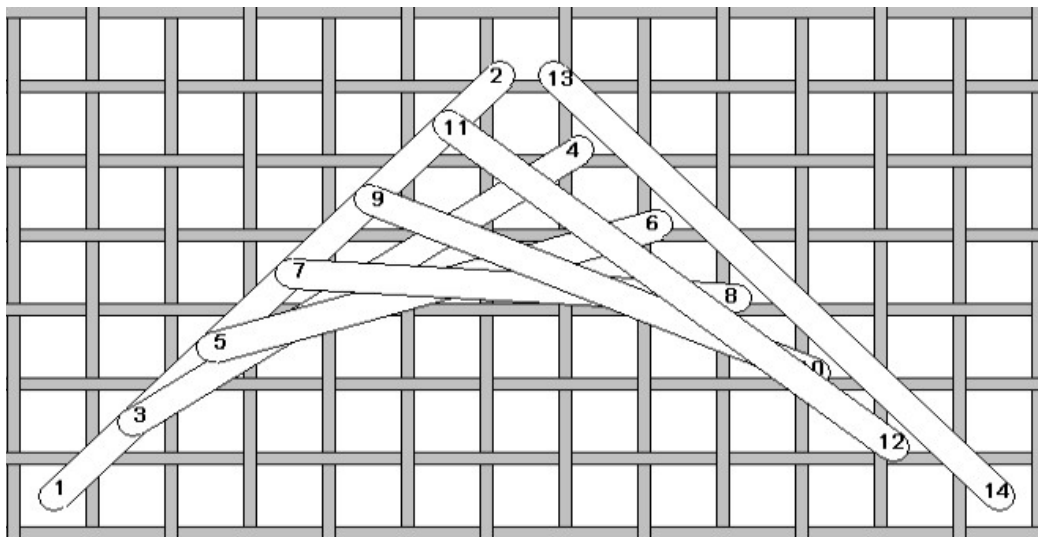
So you remember how I said we could add beads to these? Here's an example of an over 6 round Jessica with a bead. You put the bead in first, and then stitch around it – it's MUCH easier than doing the stitch first and then trying to find the holes after.



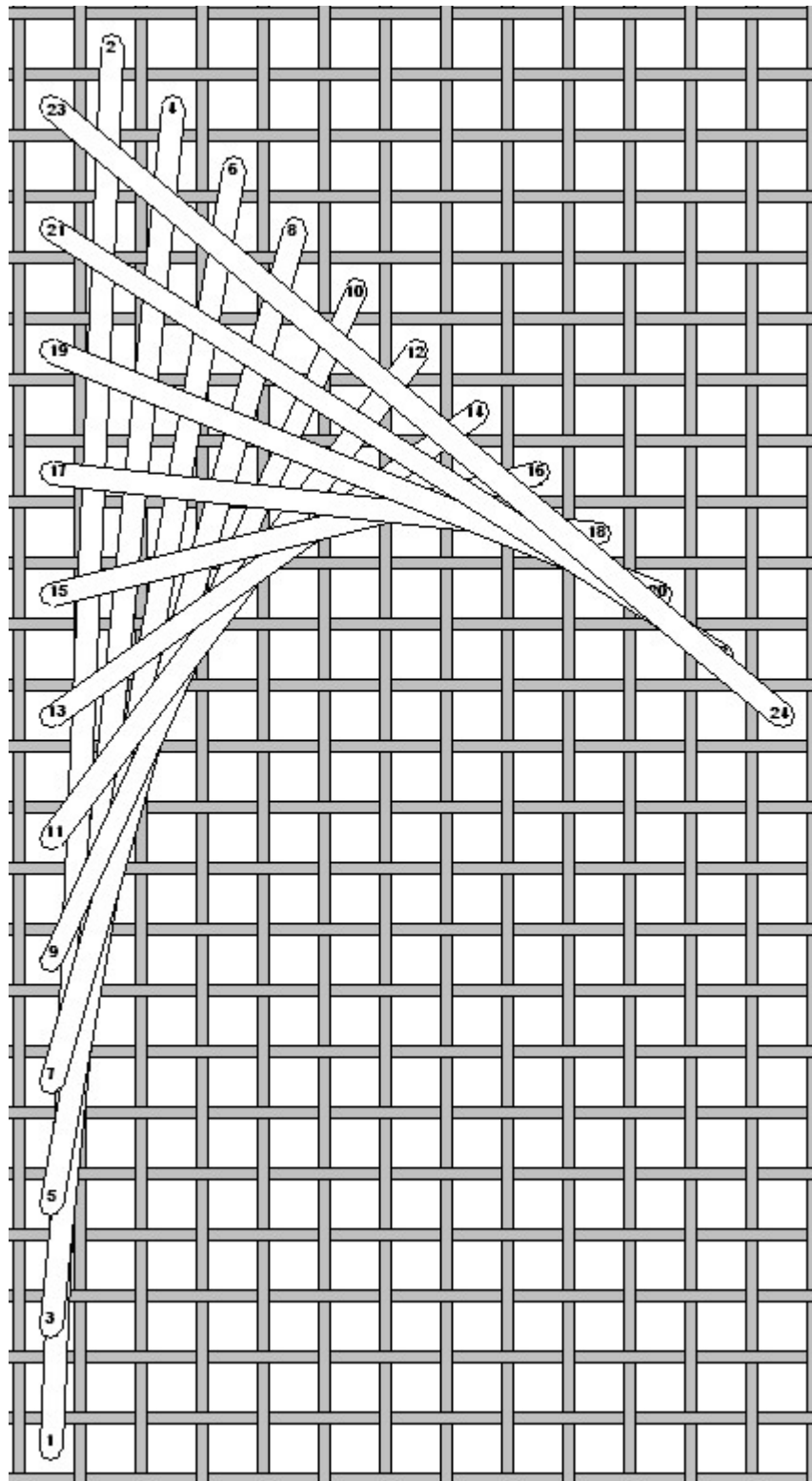
Partial stitches? No problem. This doesn't work so well with round stitches, but you can do partial triangle stitches – I like to call these open Jessica Triangles – both upright:



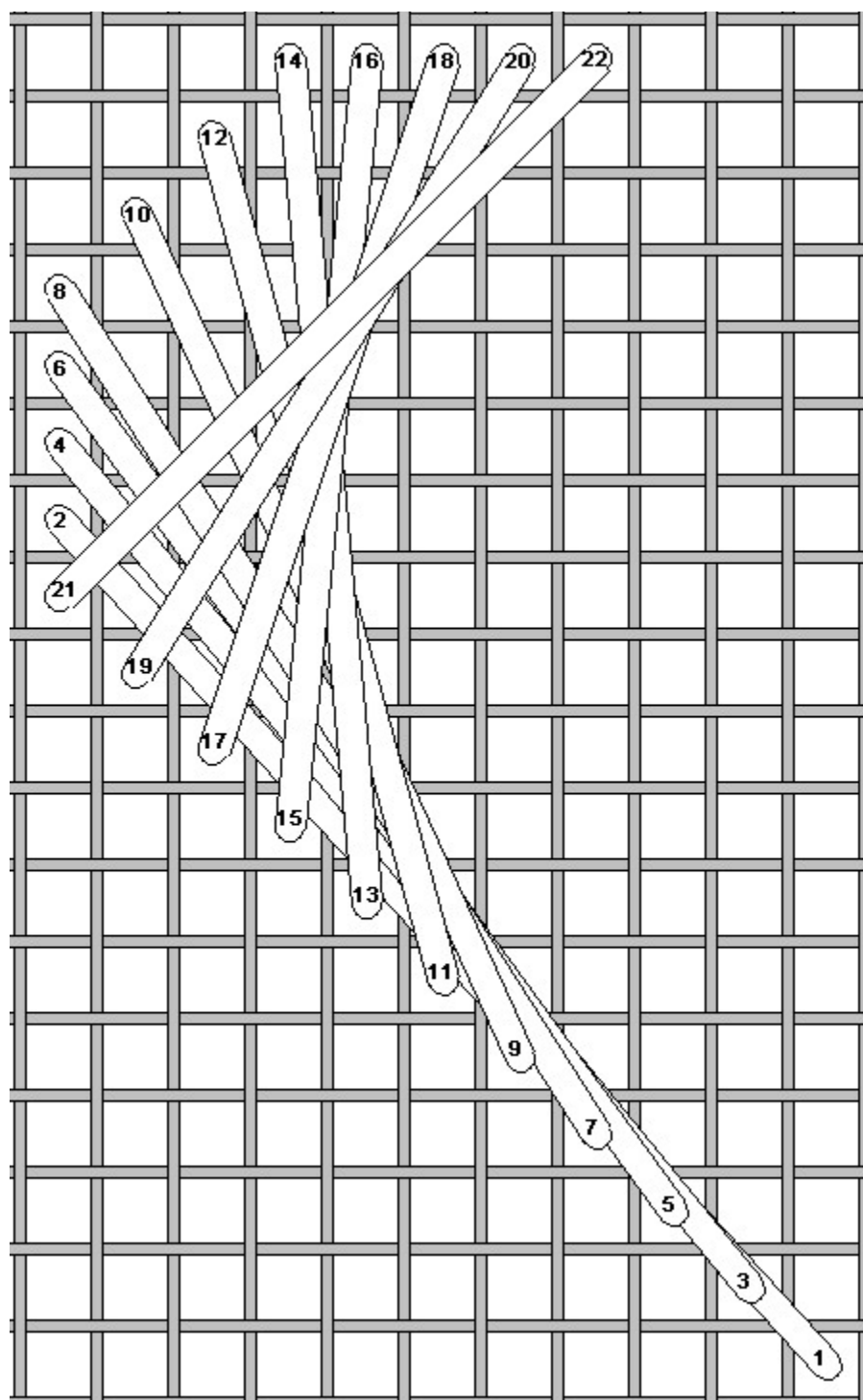
Or diagonal:

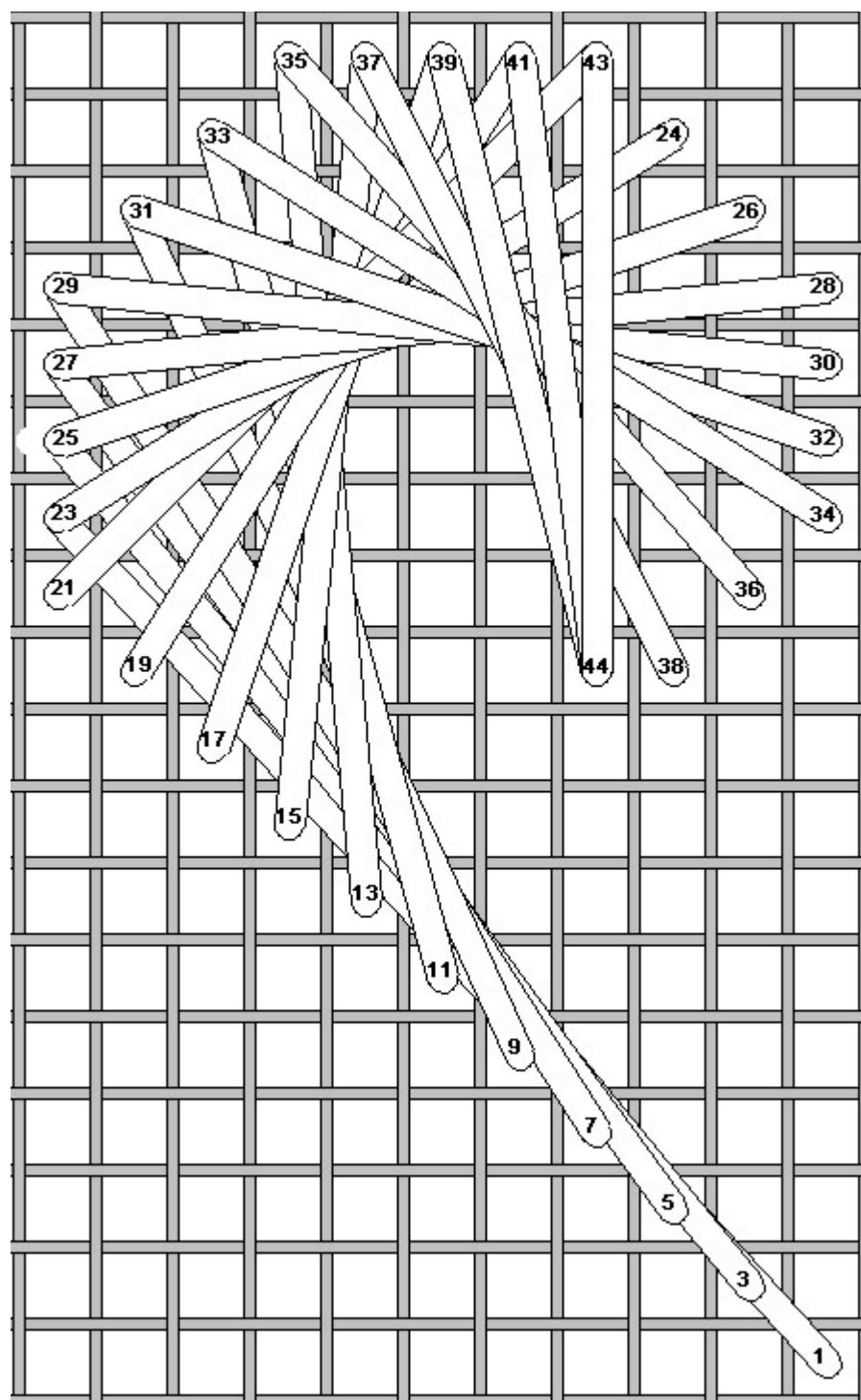


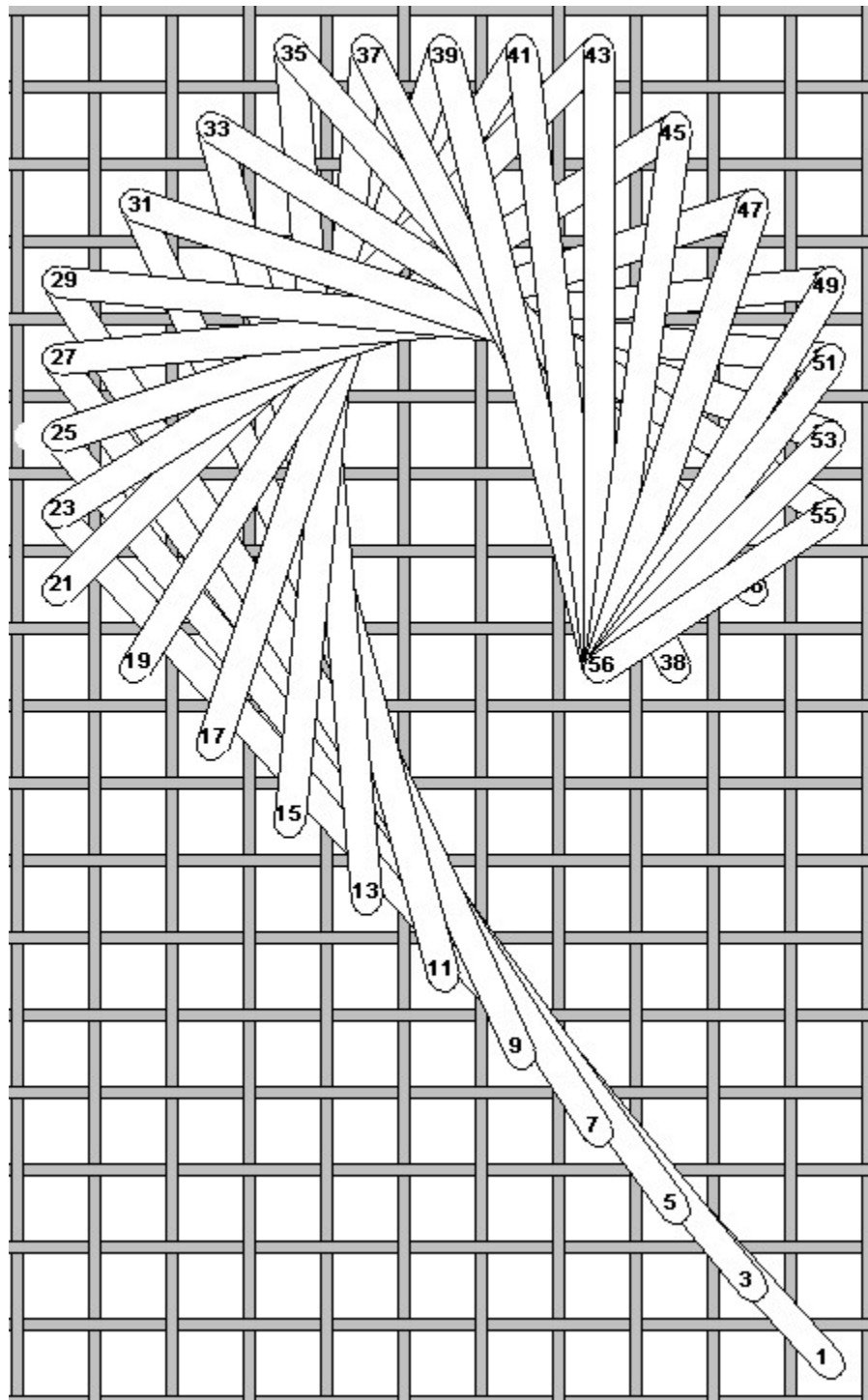
We can vary the shape of these as well. I've changed this next one so that on the vertical edge it's every second hole, but on the diagonal edge, it uses every hole. You end up with a stitch like this:



How about a heart? Yes, you can make Jessica hearts too. These are so pretty. We do them in halves.

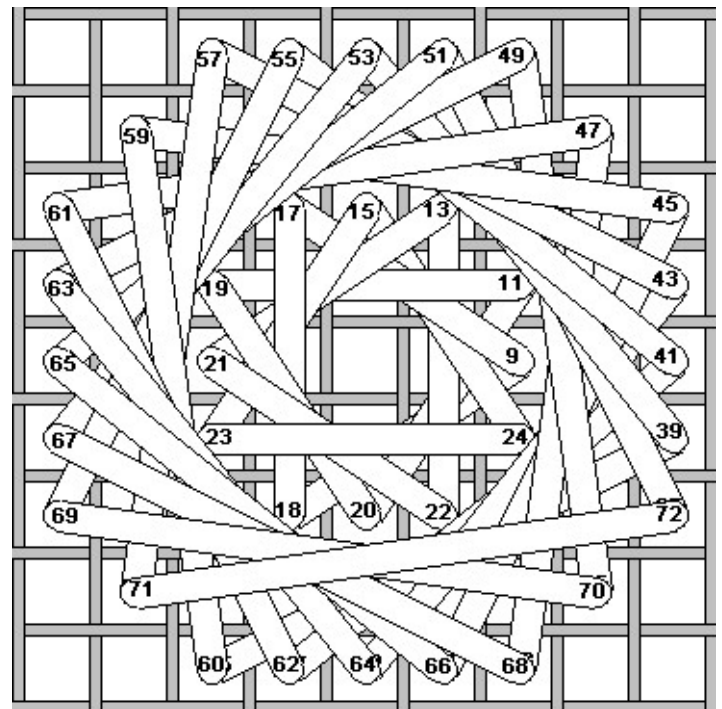
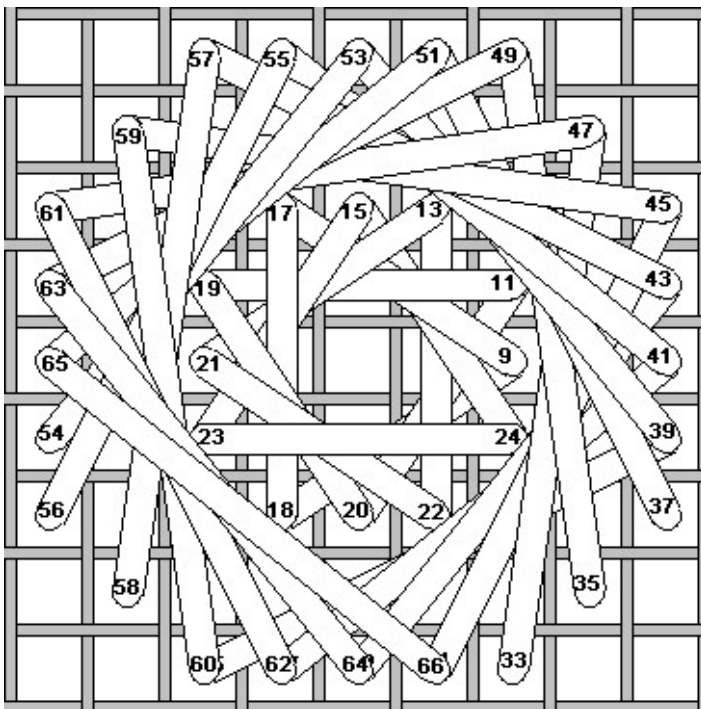
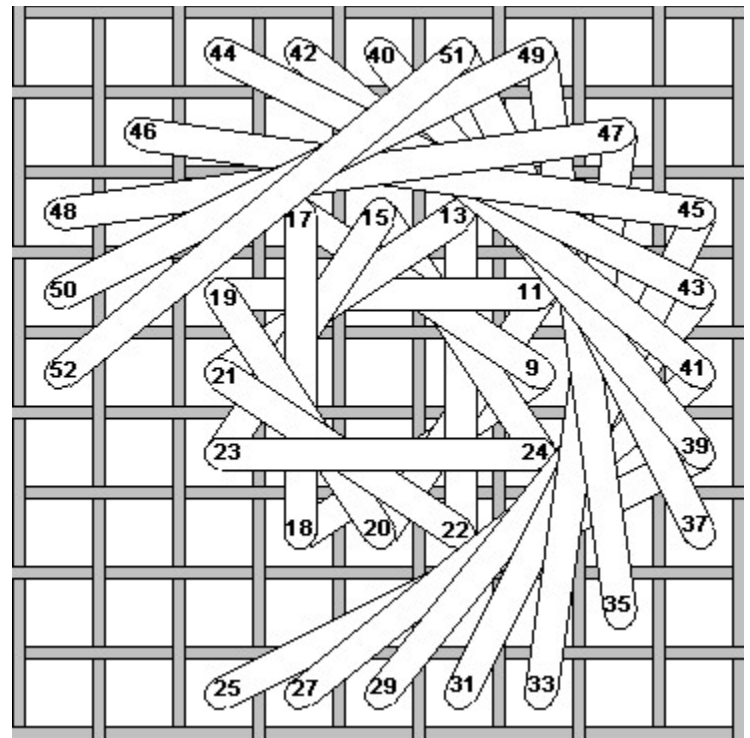
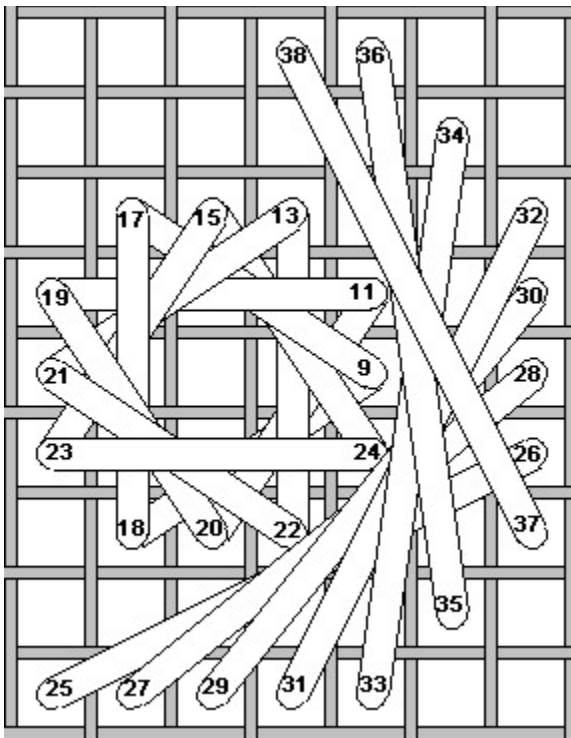




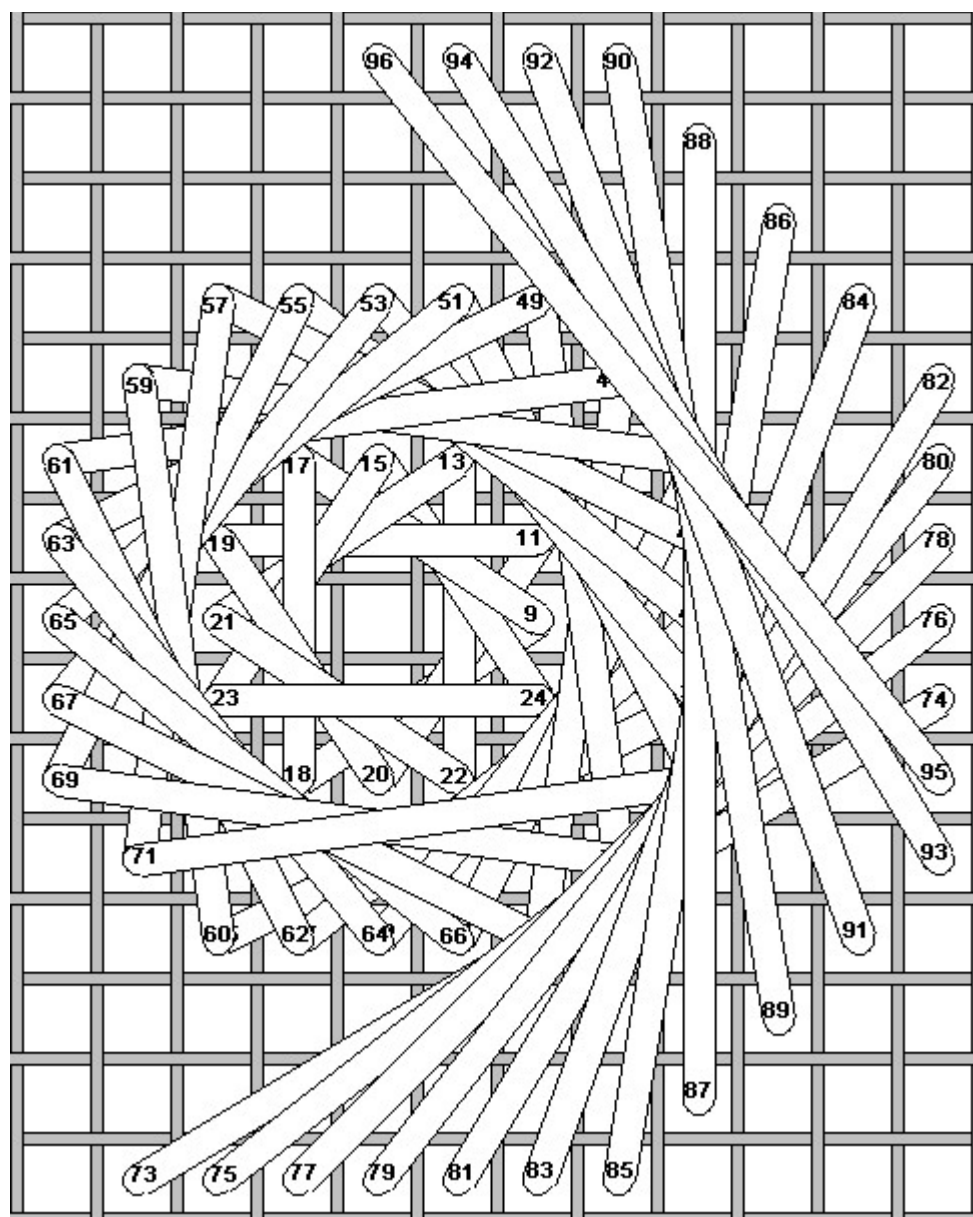


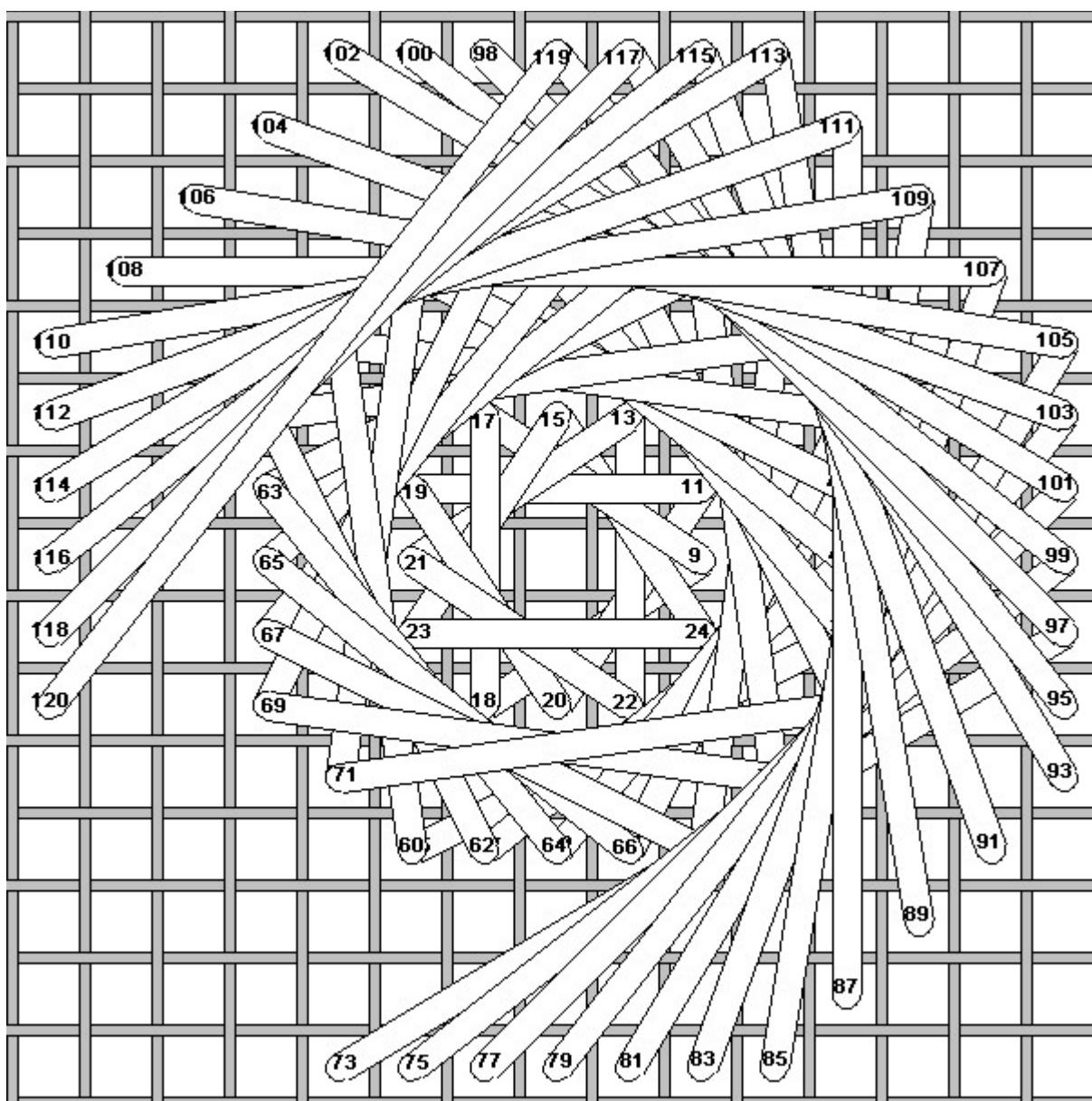
And then we reverse the stitch to finish the heart (pictures of the finished stitch are at the end).

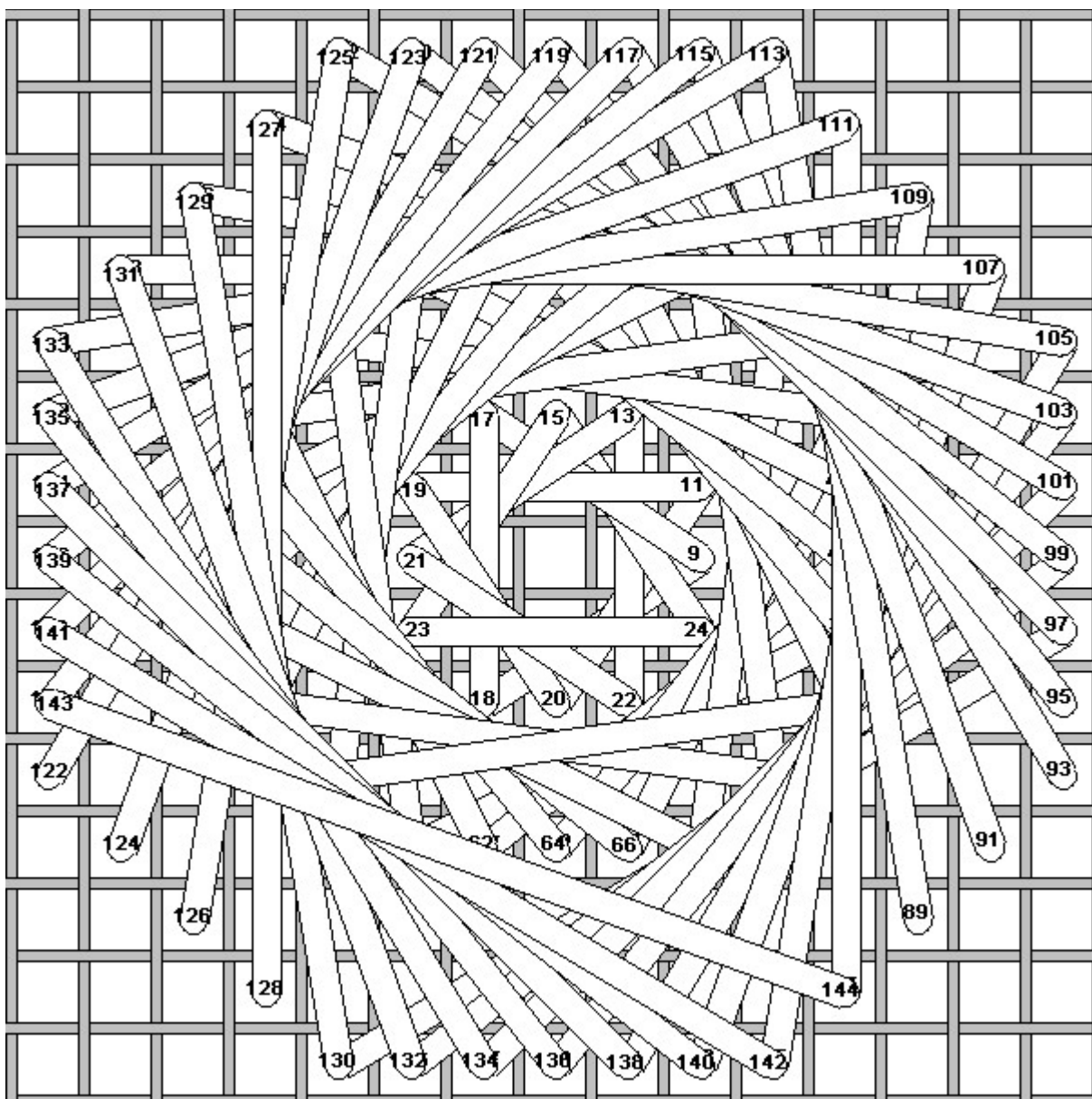
Finally... we can also layer Jessica Stitches. This is so much fun. With layered stitches, you will start in the middle and work your way out. So let's have a look. We've seen this one broken down as the first stitch we looked at, but we'll start with a Round Jessica Stitch over 4. Now, let's add a Round Jessica over 8 threads around it like this:

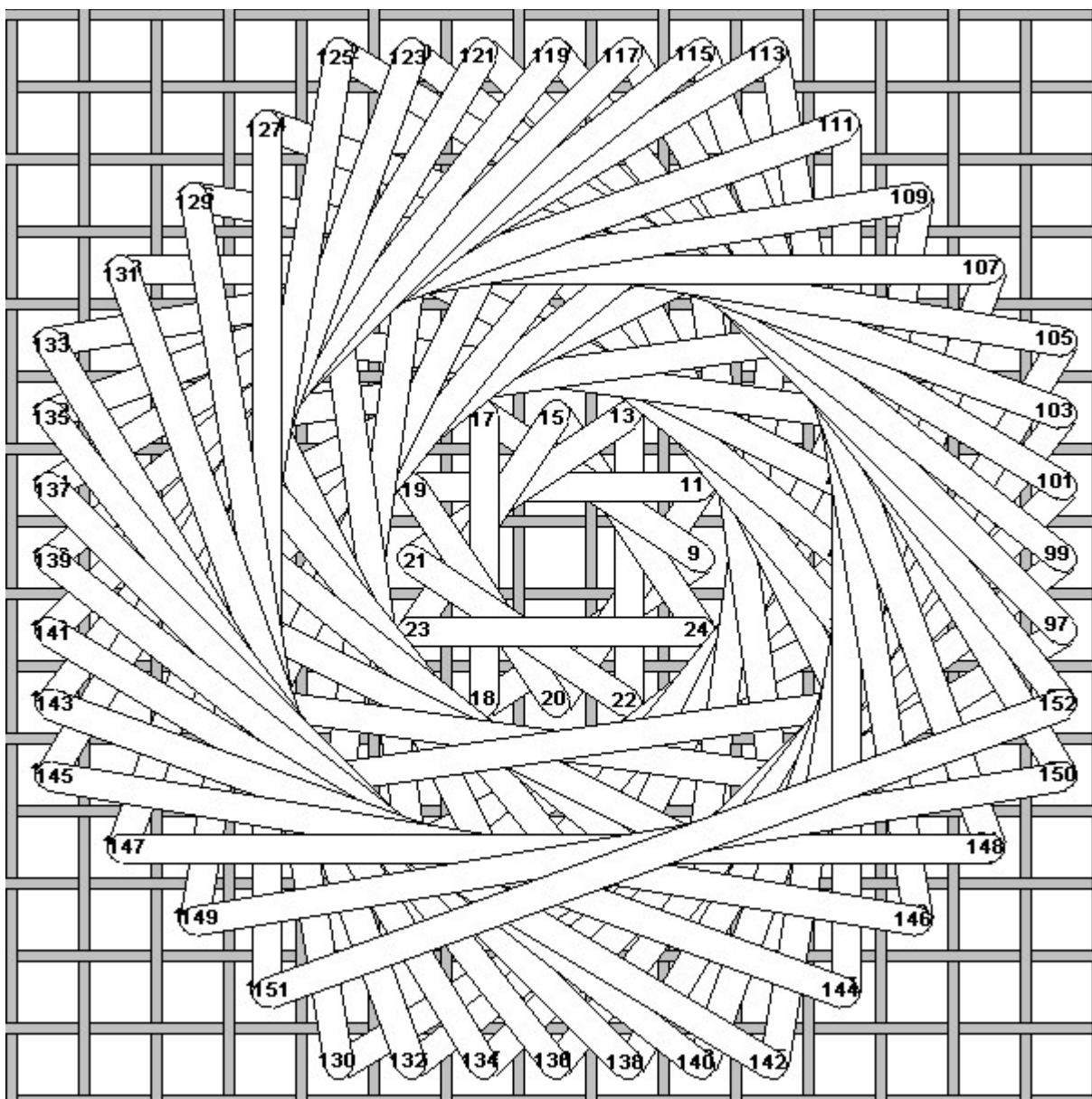


Cool right? Let's add another one! Around this, we'll add a Round Jessica over 14...







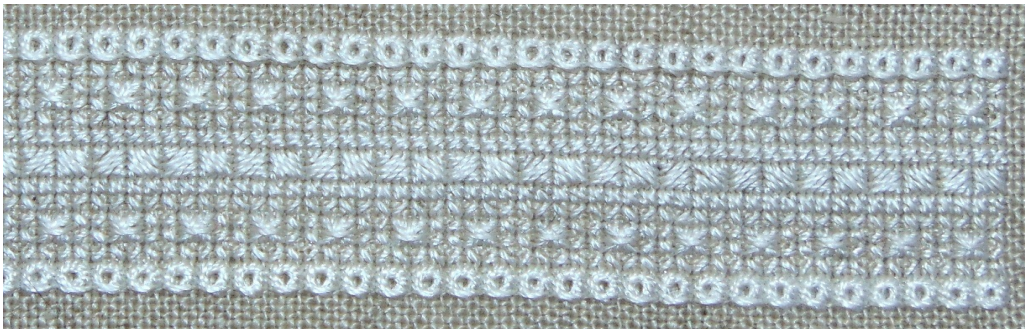


Wasn't that fun?? They look so very awesome. You can change them up by alternating colours and all sorts of fun stuff. :)

So where do you use Jessica stitches? Well here are some examples. :)

Round Stitches:

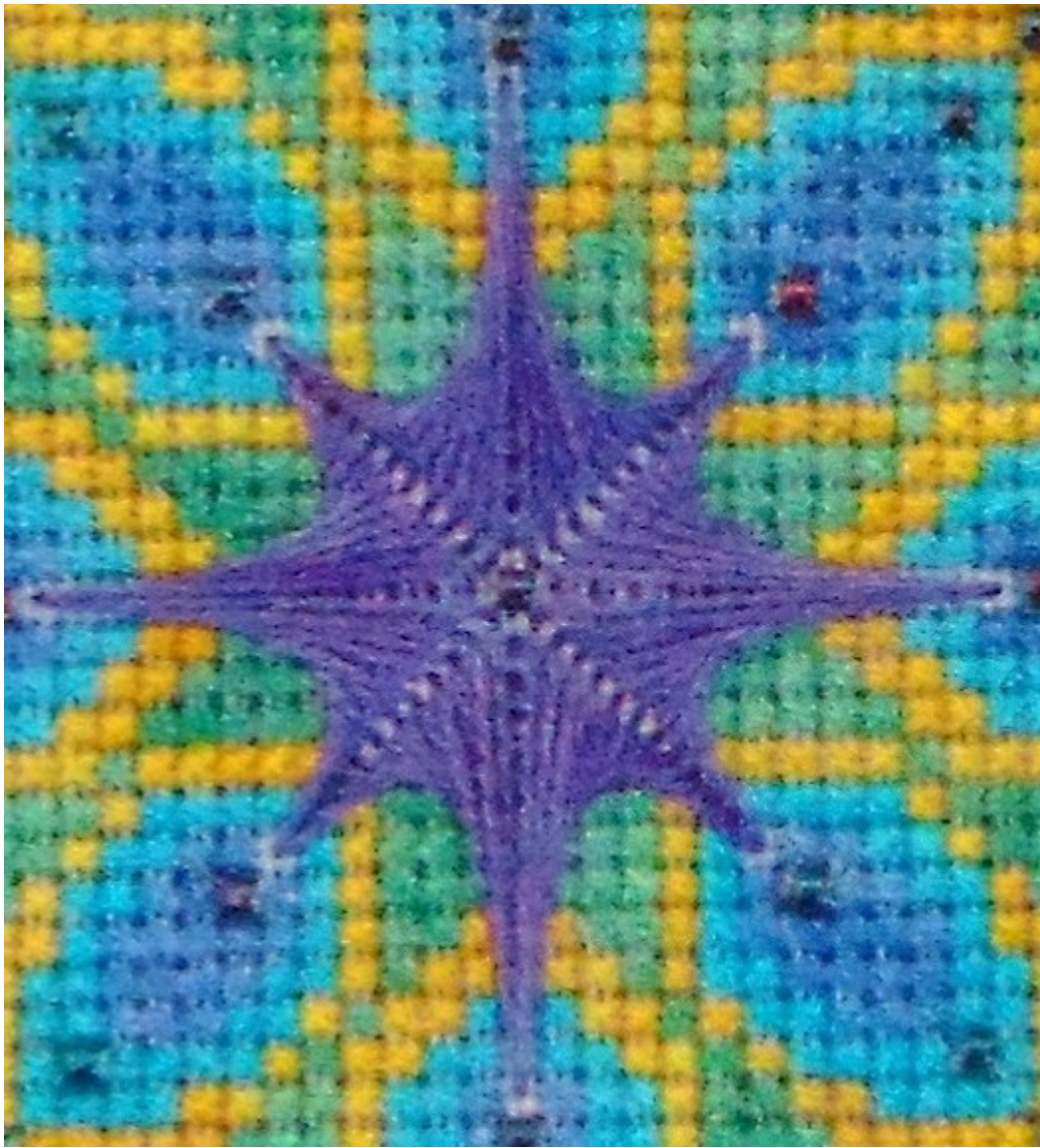




Here is an example of a more square stitch:



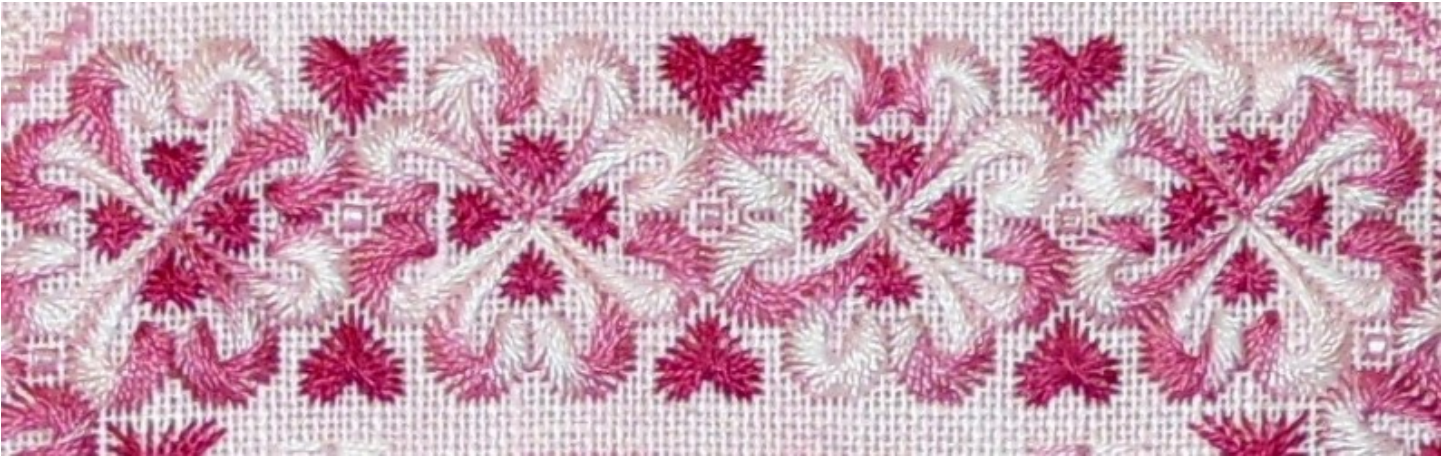
Here's a neat group open triangles:



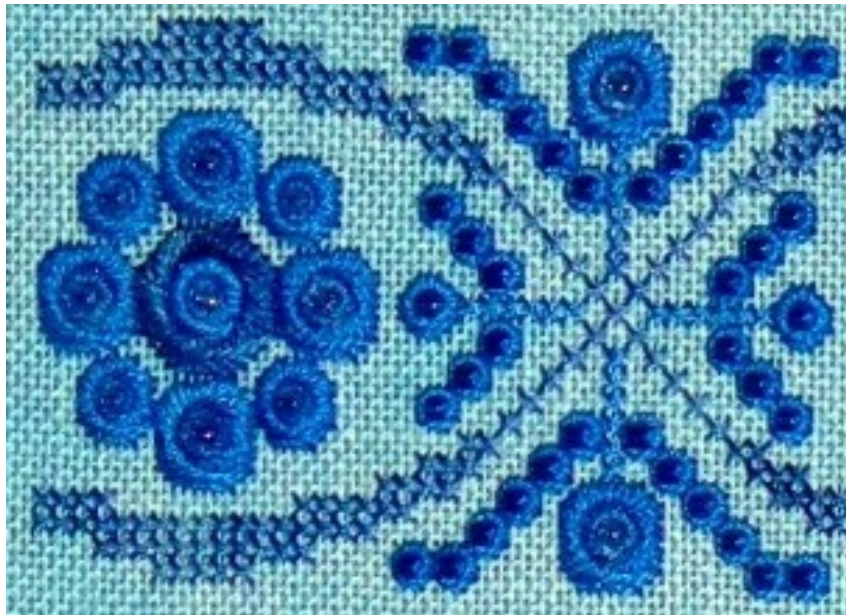
A closed Triangle?



And remember those hearts I was mentioning?



And finally... how about those layered stitches?



I love Jessicas. I think that's pretty obvious! There is just so much you can do with them! I will warn you in advance... they are thread eaters. They're a pretty dense stitch, with a lot of legs, so the large ones will just make your floss disappear. But they're so much fun! They do take a little while to get the hang of, and on some occasions, like the hearts, they can be a little fiddly finding the right holes, but like anything – practice makes perfect! :)