

How to Make a St. Brigid's Cross



Making a St Brigid's Cross is a custom in Ireland. The St Brigid's Cross is made out of plants called rushes (*Juncus effusus*) for hanging above the entrances to dwellings to invoke the help of St Brigid in warding off disease.

St Brigid's Day is celebrated on the 1st February each year and rushes are traditionally used to make the St Brigid's Cross. Rushes are collected from wetlands and cut into pieces, 8-12 inches long.

City dwellers often find it hard to get rushes so environmentally friendly paper drinking straws are a good substitute. Use rubber bands to tie up the ends.

If You Can't Get Rushes You Will Need

- 9 paper environmentally friendly drinking straws
- 4 small rubber bands

What to Do

1. Hold one of the straws/rushes vertically. Fold a second straw/rush in half as in the diagram.
2. Place the first vertical straw/rush in the centre of the folded second straw/rush.
3. Hold the centre overlap tightly between thumb and forefinger.
4. Turn the two straws/rushes held together 90 degrees counter clockwise so that the open ends of the second straw/rush are projecting vertically upwards.
5. Fold a third straw/rush in half and over both parts of the second straw/rush to lie horizontally from left to right against the first straw/rush. Hold tight.
6. Holding the centre tightly, turn the three straws/rushes 90 degrees counter clockwise so that the open ends of the third straw/rush are pointing upwards.
7. Fold a new straw/rush in half over and across all the straws pointing upwards.
8. Repeat the process of rotating all the straws/rushes 90 degrees counter clockwise, adding a new folded straw/rush each time until all nine straws/rushes have been used up to make the cross.
9. Secure the arms of the cross with elastic bands. Trim the ends to make them all the same length. The St Brigid's Cross is now ready to hang.

