

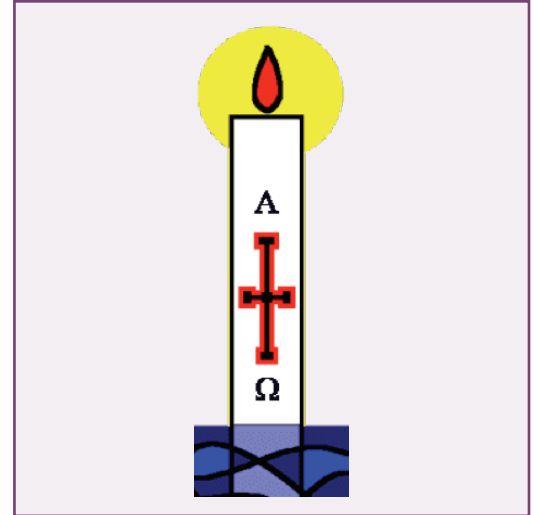


40 Ideas for 40 Days

from Joe Paprocki

Making a Paschal Candle

- Ask if any of the young people have experienced a power outage during a storm at night time
- Talk about how frightening it can be to be surrounded by darkness and how we rely on flashlights and candles to provide light for us at these moments.
- Explain that we use the image of “darkness” to talk about the bad things that are going on in our world.
- Have the young people sift through some newspapers and magazines to find pictures and stories that are examples of “darkness” in our world.
- Explain that, when the young people were baptized, a large candle stood off to the side of the baptismal font, symbolizing the light of Christ that dispels the darkness from our lives.
- Show a picture of a paschal candle.
- Tell the young people that the season of Lent is a time when many adults are preparing to be baptized on Holy Saturday and that we prepare with them, renewing our commitment to our own baptism.
- Explain that at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, the entire church is dark and then a [fire is lit and blessed](#). This fire is then used to light the Easter candle, also called the [Paschal Candle](#), which is [carried into the church](#) to symbolize the light of Christ that dispels the darkness.
- Invite the young people to make their own Paschal candle.



Making a Paschal Candle

- Ahead of time, take some cardboard or foam display boards (36 x 48) and cut them into “pillars” that are 4 inches wide and 36 inches tall.
- Provide each of the young people with a pillar.
- In the middle of the pillar, have them create a cross by glueing strips of red fabric in the shape of a cross. The vertical beam should be a 1/2 in x 8 in. Then, create the horizontal beam by placing one strip of fabric (1/2 in. x 2 in.) on the right side of the vertical beam and an identical strip on the left side.
- Have the young people use thick permanent markers to write in the numerals of the current year in the 4 corners of the cross as shown here: [paschal-candle-cross-and-year](#)
- Have the young people trace (using the permanent marker) the Greek alpha above the cross and omega below the cross as shown in the picture above, left.

Α Ω

- Explain that [alpha and omega](#) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and that they represent Christ as “the beginning and the end” (see Revelation 1:8; 21:6; and 22:13)
- Invite the young people to add other symbols to the candle such as a [lamb with a victory banner](#) (to symbolize Jesus’ Resurrection) or [grapes and wheat](#) (to symbolize the Eucharist) or a [dove](#) (to symbolize the Holy Spirit) or some decorative “borders” above and below the cross.
- Finally, have the young people cut out (of cardboard or foam) and color a [flame](#) to affix to the top of the candle.
- Encourage the young people to take their paschal candles home and to place them prominently as a reminder of their call to renew their baptism this Lent.