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| CraftSt. Brigid’s CrossMethod  1 After searching for many months I finally broke down  and purchased a cross from  the traditional  Irish-American gift shop. I took  it  apart and found the simple secret of the design.  The process does wonderful things for busy fingers and is great with story telling! 1.  Find 9  8-12 inch  rushes, swizzle sticks  or  drinking  straws  and  4 small-to-medium sized rubber  bands. You can use up to 20 rushes or straws. 2.   Hold one of  the rushes/straws vertically.  3.   Fold  a  second  straw  in  half  horizontally over  and at a  right  angle over  the center of  the  first straw with the second  straw projecting to the right. Snug the inside of  the bend  right  up to the first straw  at   its  center.  4.   Grasp the center overlap tightly between thumb and forefinger.  5.   Turn the two straws held together 90  degrees counter clockwise  (left). The two ends of the second straw will be projecting  upwards.  6.  Fold the third straw in half over both parts of the second straw horizontally from left to right and  snug the inside of the fold up against the center and the second straw. Hold tight.  7. Holding the  center **tightly,** rotate all straws  (the entire assembly) 90  degrees    counter clockwise. (left) 8. This time  the bottom half of the first straw will be projecting upward. Fold a new straw in half over and across all straws projecting upward.  9. Snug the straw tightly against the center and against the vertical straws.  10. Holding the center tightly rotate all straws (the entire assembly) 90 degrees counter clockwise.  11. Fold a new  straw in half  over all vertical straws from left to right and  snug up to center and to the right.  12. Repeat the process of rotating  all straws (the entire assembly) 90 degrees  to the left and folding  the new straw  over until all straws  have been used.  Remember: Hold tight to the center.  13. When the last straw has been used snug all straws to center being careful to hold tight to the last straw folded.  14. Secure the last arm of the cross with a rubber band or if using rushes platted straw or string.  Then secure each  other arm.  You can also slip the ends of the last V under the one folded underneath it so that the cross does not come apart. I wrap one of the arms with wire to suspend it.15. If using drinking straws you can paint them, but be careful as wet paint will dissolve the thin paper covering of drinking straws. Place rushes on a  flat surface to dry. You may wish to seal the rushes  when dry with a paint of your choice. I prefer the natural color so I use a matte clear lacquer to seal them. In Ireland the crosses are placed in the thatch of the roof and so become darkened with the smoke of ages. If you wish to create this effect use a matte black lacquer.  | 1bitmap.gif2bitmap.gif3bitmap.gif |

Method  2

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| This method produces a cross in a form, which is much like the Eye of God,andas such it brings to mind the antiquity of the Celtic Traditions of Ireland and possible connections to other cultures.***Materials:***Two sticks and either rushes (according to tradition, rushes should be pulled and not cut.) or wire or paper twist. Heavy gauge electrical wire (I use green!) makes for a great re-usable cross which can be re-constructed for each session.I start the cross and pass it through the class audience for completion. 1.Secure two sticks together at right angles.     (I use string or tape). 2.Pull rush or wire from center attachment  under the X in the top image over the top across the center to the left. Then under the bottom left spoke then over the upper left spoke then curve back under it and continue in a clockwise direction (to the right). Ideally there should be a few inches of stick remaining exposed on each spoke. It should  resemble a cross more than an eye of god...  (Source:Lettice Sanford Straw Work and Corn Dollies)   | bcv2.gif |

Method  3

This method produces a cross much like that of method 1.

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| For some reason this method seems to  be  more archaic than method 1.  1.Tie nine straws together at their ends.  2.Spread them as shown with the tied end      facing down (three to the right and two each      other direction. (Image #1)  3.Fold the front straw of the three under the other two.(Image2)  4.Bring it up and over to be alongside the two at the nest corner.(Image3)  5.Completed cross is shown in Image 4   (Source: Joan Rendell, Your Book of Corn Dollies.)Method 4 Three Armed Cross1. Select 12-15 pieces of rush or straws. If using rush select the long leaves attached to the “cat tail stalk”. Cut them into 12 inch lengths. Fold them in half along the long dimension. Then fold them in half at the center to form a v shape.2. Fold one v over the other with one arm under/inside the first to form a right angle.3. Fold the third v over all others inside the right angle to form the third arm of the cross.4. Turn the cross counter-clockwise and place the next v over the others across to the next arm. Repeat. 5. When you fold your last v tuck its arms under the one beneath it to lock it in place. Bind the ends of the arms with string to hold them in place. If using rushes you can use a thin strip of rush to tie the arms off. | cbv3.gif |