

How to Make an El Salvador Cross



This colorful, lightweight, cardboard cross is in the La Palma style of art, named after artists living near the village of La Palma, El Salvador. On wooden crosses or plaques, the artists paint bright-colored scenes of things that are important to them: homes, flowers, birds, plants and animals, and people. The crosses are powerful signs of God's love for God's creation.

Using cardboard boxes and the 33 reproducible templates included with these instructions, your congregation can construct a community cross in the La Palma style.

Materials Needed

Large cross (10' tall, 7' wide): 17 12" x 12" cardboard boxes (7 boxes x 10 boxes)

Medium cross (8' tall, 5' wide): 13 12" x 12" cardboard boxes (5 boxes x 8 boxes)

60 templates for coloring (copy onto 11" x 14" paper and trim)

bright neon markers

strapping tape

staple gun

Three Easy Steps

1. Copy and distribute the templates to children, youth or adults for coloring. Use bright neon markers for vivid color.

2. Place boxes together to form a cross. Use strapping tape to secure the boxes so the cross can be lifted without falling apart.

3. Staple pictures with staple gun to all sides and ends. Remember, it will be lifted! Because the templates are 11" x 11", you may center them on the boxes and leave a white border, or overlap them.

Using the cross

- ✂ Use it for a Taizé service or Prayer Around the Cross, a meditative prayer service included in the 2001 Global Mission Tool Kit
- ✂ Carry it in Good Friday processions
- ✂ Use it in floats for community parades
- ✂ Stand it in the narthex when it is not in use.



Fifth graders and their teachers at Pilgrim Lutheran School in Chicago took 3 hours to color 60 reproducible templates and assemble them into this cross.

Two 90-minute sessions introduced El Salvador and its culture, explained the cross and its meaning, and even included time for a light El Salvadoran meal.

