

How to Make Candles Using Old Crayons

Contributed by LeAnn R. Ralph
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As featured in the story "A Candle For Christmas" from the book: Christmas In Dairyland (True Stories From a Wisconsin Farm)

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Materials:

- 1 wax carton (quart) (milk, fabric softener, or orange juice)

- 1 pound of paraffin wax

- 4 or 5 old crayons

- two trays of ice cubes

- a double boiler (or an empty coffee can and a saucepan)

- 1 piece of ordinary white package string about six inches long.

{bot_wrgoogle} Caution: Do not heat paraffin directly over the burner. Paraffin is easily combustible. Use a double boiler or a two-pound coffee can set in a pan of water. I put the coffee can on top of home canning jar rings (the rings, not the flat lids). If the can is not set on top of something, the concave bottom creates a vacuum when the water begins to heat up, plus if it's on the bottom of the pan, it's just that much closer to the burner.

Trim the top part of the carton off so that what remains is about six inches high.

Cut the string so that it is six inches long. (To make a wick that lasts longer, try braiding three pieces of string together.)

Melt the paraffin wax over medium heat in a double boiler or a coffee can in a pan of water. Use three-quarters of a pound for a somewhat smaller candle or use all four squares for a larger candle. Once the water begins to boil, it will take 10 or 15 minutes for the paraffin to melt.

Break the crayons into small pieces and add to the paraffin. If the crayons are added first before the wax is melted, the color makes it difficult to see if all of the paraffin is liquefied.

Use a pair of tongs (a scissors works, too), and dip the string into the paraffin. Dipping the string will ensure that it is coated with paraffin since the ice cubes may prevent some sections from coming in contact with the liquid wax. Hold the string so that it is in the middle of the carton and fill the carton with ice cubes. Pour the hot paraffin over the ice cubes.

The candle will be set in about 30 minutes. Let the candle stand for another hour or two until most of the ice cubes are melted. Pour off the water. Peel off the carton. Place the candle in a tray or on a plate to catch the rest of the water from the ice cubes as they finish melting. Let the candle dry for a day or two.

The candles I have made with a single piece of string only burn for an hour or so and burn quickly enough so that most of the paraffin remains intact. To use the paraffin again, melt the candle and pour the wax into other containers to make solid candles.

~ Solid Candles ~

To make solid candles, select several glass containers. Pint or half-pint canning or jelly jars work well. For the wick, measure out a few more inches of string than is needed to reach the bottom of the container. Tie the string around a pencil. Put the pencil across the top of the container to hold the wick in place. When the paraffin and crayons are melted, pour the liquid wax into the container(s). When the candle is set, snip off the wick about a half inch above the wax.

~ Scented Candles ~

To make scented candles, put three or four teaspoons of vanilla extract into the bottom of the double boiler (or the coffee can) and then add the paraffin and crayons. When the wax is melted, pour into containers.

About The Author

LeAnn R. Ralph is a freelance writer for two newspapers in west central Wisconsin, is the editor of the Wisconsin Regional Writer (the quarterly publication of the Wisconsin Regional Writers' Assoc.) and is the author of the book, Christmas In Dairyland (True Stories From a Wisconsin Farm) (Aug. 2003); trade paperback. For more information about Christmas In Dairyland, visit <http://ruralroute2.com>

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