



Candle Safety

The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops [USCCB] has this statement on using oil or wax candles for the sanctuary (reservation) lamp and using only wax candles for other liturgical use at altar, ambo, votive stands, and in the hands of assembly: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacred-art-and-music/architecture-and-environment/use-of-candles-in-the-liturgy.cfm>

There are three main causes of candle fires in churches, candles left unattended, candles too close to flammable materials and candles tipping over.

Listed below are safety tips to help minimize the dangers of using candles:

- 1) Schools:
 - ✓ In case of a power outage use flashlights, not candles.
 - ✓ Recommendation: Do not burn candles in a classroom.
- 2) Sanctuary lamps – can be either oil or wax candles
- 3) Votive Candles – must be in tempered glass; keep flammable objects away
- 4) Altar, ambo and other candle guidelines:
 - ✓ Burn candles on steady, uncluttered, **heat-resistant surfaces**. Remember that candles can become hot enough to damage furniture.
 - ✓ Keep candles away from items that can catch fire, such as clothing, books, linens, runners of curtain.
 - ✓ Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
 - ✓ Use brass or tempered glass followers on candles to prevent dripping wax.
 - ✓ Use candleholders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily, are made from material that cannot burn and with large enough Bobeches (wax catchers) to collect dripping wax.
 - ✓ Keep candles free of foreign materials such as matches and wick clippings.
 - ✓ Except when required by liturgical law (e.g., Exposition of the Holy Eucharist), do not let candles burn for more than four hours at a time.
 - ✓ Let candles and holders cool sufficiently before moving.
 - ✓ Extinguish candles with a snuffer, avoiding burns from hot wax.
 - ✓ Always use drip-containers or paper Bobeshes that are made for candle use during an assembly such as Easter Vigil.