REALISTIC NAVIGATION LIGHTS

Here is a simple way to create navigation lights for your model airplane - nothing expensive but quite real looking.   These were created using some left over 1/8" square balsa, some bright white, red and green enamel paints, and Zap 560 canopy glue.

First I finish covering the plane but in this case I added the light base before I applied the trim color. Take a piece of 1/8" square balsa or whatever is appropriate for the scale of the plane and round this by placing it in a fold of fine sandpaper and spinning while applying pressure. Try not to sand it too small in diameter.   Now cut a piece a little longer than needed for each light. Make a v-groove at one end of each piece so that it rests well on the leading edge of the wing or trailing edge of the tail as needed. You can use baking soda or sawdust as filler if you cannot get a perfect fit. Cutting oversize now allows for you to keep working until you get a good fit. Trim to length and sand for a nice finish. Now in this example I applied the trim color which overlaps the light fixture. Once this dries I take the appropriate color enamel for the light location and just paint the flat surface where the lens will go. This will become the color of the light. Once this dries you are ready for the final step. Take a drop of the Zap 560 canopy glue and create a rounded droplet on the end of your light fixtures. This glue will dry clear to translucent giving the effect of depth and carry the background color forward.   You can force the shape of the drop to be rounder by orienting the plane so the drop of glue hangs downward.

Neat.