

Labyrinth Guide



How do I walk the labyrinth?

The basic principle for labyrinth prayer is simple; you pray while walking the route laid out by the labyrinth, so that your walking inspires your prayer, and vice versa. The journey is not a maze, there are no “wrong turns,” only a circuitous journey inward to the centre, which mirrors our path to wisdom. After resting in prayer at the heart of the labyrinth, the pray-er makes the returning outward journey back out towards the world, carrying the peace, wisdom, or insight gained from the time of prayer-walking.

- Before entering the labyrinth, take a moment or two to “set your intention” for today’s walk (see “How do I pray while walking the labyrinth”, below).
- Stand at the entrance point and centre yourself, focus on the task of walking, and of mindful attention to your “intention.”
- Make the prayer walk in personal silence. (You may want to listen to calm music with earbuds).

- Walk, gently, slowly, at your own pace, mindful of others (you don't need to wait or match your pace to theirs). Some people walk with a rhythm of 3 or 4 steps followed by a pause, and repeat.
- Follow the route marked by the labyrinth toward the centre "rose" of the labyrinth. Let the journey towards the centre take you deeper into your own quest.
- When you reach the centre, pause, pray, until a sense of readiness to return to the world nudges you to turn to make your outward journey. Return, following the same route.

- After you have left the labyrinth, take a moment to sit in one of the chairs provided around the periphery. Allow the wisdom or peace to settle within you. If you wish to pray a little longer, do so in your seat.
- Leave the labyrinth space quietly, so as not to disturb others in their prayer-walk.
- (If you find the journey too long, or troubling, you are free to simply step out of the labyrinth.)

How do I pray while walking the Labyrinth?

It's up to you! That said, here are some tried-and-true suggestions you may want to try if you are new to labyrinth walking.

a) Reflecting on Holy Week. Before walking the labyrinth you may want to read the story of Holy Week in a Gospel, such as Mark 11-15. Let the story replay in your mind and soul as you walk to the centre (which can represent the cross). When you are ready to leave, recall the Empty tomb, and make your outward journey be one of reflecting on how you will share Good News of Resurrection with those in your world.

b) Prayer for others. You may have people who have asked you to pray for them. You might try walking 5 paces, pausing to pray for one person, before repeating for each person.

c) Your own spiritual journey – what wisdom are you seeking? Use the inner journey to walk towards that wisdom. Use the outward journey to carry that wisdom with you back out to your everyday world.

d) Finding focus or balance. Simply let the rhythm of the walk, and pauses restore a sense of inner rhythm and balance. A “mantra” can be useful “God guide my steps, guide my life” (or something similar).

e) Print/bring your own copy of the guided labyrinth prayers (below) if you think they may help you.



Centering Prayer

Holy One, as I prepare to walk,
guide my steps.

As I prepare to be alone with my thoughts,
focus my mind.

As I explore the pathways of my heart,
keep them true to the path you want me to walk.

As I approach the centre,
may I find you.

As I return to the world,
be my companion and guide,
Amen.



Meditation on Scripture: Psalm 119

Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the teaching of the Lord.

Happy are those who abide by God's teaching
who seek God with their whole heart,
who also avoid wrongdoing,
but walk in the ways God has set before us...

Holy One, your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.

What is a prayer labyrinth?

Labyrinths pre-date Christianity as an embodied form of prayer and meditation, and are still used by people of all faiths and spiritual paths. Labyrinths were used within the Christian tradition as early as the 4th century of the Common Era, and became popular in the 12th century, being laid out on Cathedral floors or courtyards a spiritual and practical alternative to making costly and dangerous pilgrimages to holy places. The most well known one is at Chartres, in Northern France, and it is the one which provides the inspiration and pattern for our new sanctuary labyrinth.



