

Walking the Labyrinth

The labyrinth, in various forms, has been used in many faiths as a tool for contemplative religious practices for thousands of years. One of the oldest and most famous Christian labyrinths was set in the stone tiled floor of the Cathedral at Chartres, France, around 1200 AD. For some, it has been used as a symbolic pilgrimage to the Holy Land -- for others, it can be a quiet walk into an experience of Divine Presence. For more detailed information, read Walking a Sacred Path by Rev Lauren Artress in the church library or at the public library. This labyrinth, at 20' x 20', is about one fourth the size recommended for a permanent labyrinth.

There is no wrong way to walk the Labyrinth, so long as you do not disturb the practice of others. The following suggestions are made by experienced “pilgrims” of the walk. Add or omit as needed. Allow about an hour.

1. Sit quietly for a few minutes. Prepare yourself to enter your sacred space. Feel your feet on the ground, and the supporting chair. Notice your breath. Notice any sorrow, regret, resentment or other burden you carry that may disturb your peace of mind. If you are ready to let some of that burden go, offer it now at the feet of the Lord.
2. When you are ready, step onto the path. Walk at a speed that is comfortable. It's OK to pass others or to be passed—or to pause or step off the path if you need to. If walking is painful or difficult, remain seated and use one of the paper labyrinths, tracing the path with a finger. Please leave the laminated copies—but feel free to take a paper copy. The “walk” can also be done with a wheelchair.
3. If you have a favorite prayer, hymn, or mantra, you may use it on your walk -- or choose a CD and play it -- or keep silence.
4. When you reach the center, stop. Sit and meditate or pray for a time.
5. If you brought in a burden, you may decide to leave it here at the center. Again, you can leave it at the Lord's feet, as He asked us to do. Take a flower petal with you if you wish, to represent Divine Love replacing the burden in your heart.
6. When you are ready, begin your outward journey – again at a pace that is comfortable.
7. On leaving the labyrinth, sit for a few minutes and reflect on this experience. Prepare to re-enter the secular world. If so moved, leave a comment. Drink some water before leaving the church.