

Walking the Labyrinth Reflection Options

Option One

The Greatest Commandments

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it; 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:34-40)

On the Way In Name and reflect on a way you loved God this past week.

On the Way Out Name and reflect on a way you loved your neighbor (brother or sister, parent, friend, etc.) this past week.

Option Two

Repenting of Our Self-Centeredness

Then [Jesus] said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:23-24)

On the Way In Name and reflect on a way you worked hard to inappropriately get your own way this week.

On the Way Out Talk with God about how you can be different next time.

Donation How to Obtain

The Conference Labyrinth is housed at Alamo Heights UMC and is available for churches/groups to use in worshipful experiences and fostering spiritual formation. Reservations can be made online by going to www.riotexas.org/spiritualformation to download and fill out the reservation form. A suggested donation fee of \$50 is requested. Make checks payable to the Rio Texas Conference.

Please return the completed form and check to:
Alamo Heights UMC
Attention Leah Jayne
825 E. Basse Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78209

Reservations are on a first-come-first-served basis. For more information, call 210-826-3215 and speak with Leah Jayne, Administrative Assistant.



Labyrinth Courtesy of
Rio Texas Conference
of the United Methodist Church
and **The Academy Council of South Texas**
San Antonio, Texas

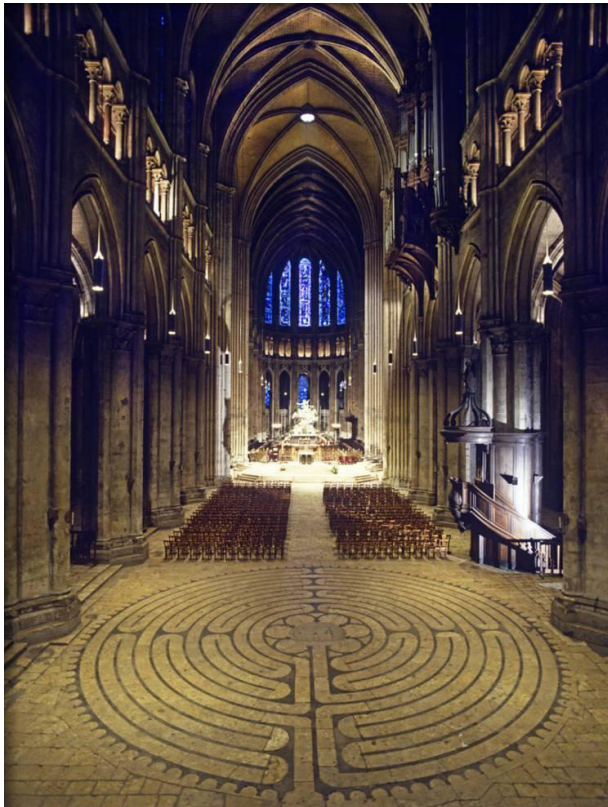
Brochure text from
Grace Cathedral
San Francisco, California



What is the Labyrinth?

The labyrinth is an ancient pattern found in many cultures around the world. Labyrinth designs are on pottery, tablets, and tiles that date back 4,000 years. Many patterns are based on spirals from nature. In Native American culture it is called the Medicine Wheel and Man in the Maze. The Celts described it as the Never Ending Circle. In mystical Judaism it is known as the Kabala. A common feature is a single path winding in a circuitous way to the center.

The labyrinth became part of the western Christian tradition during the Middle Ages, when it was incorporated into Cathedrals across Europe. The Medieval Eleven Circuit Labyrinth is replicated on the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France, where it was placed in 1201. (This is the style of labyrinth present in front of you.) Of the eighty Gothic cathedrals built during the Middle Ages,



Labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral



twenty-two had labyrinths. The only one remaining in its original form is at Chartres, and for the last 250 years it has gone unused - covered with seating.

Labyrinths help one quiet the mind, find balance, and encourage meditation, insight, and celebration. They are open to all as a non-denominational, cross-cultural tool for reflection. Labyrinths can be found in medical centers, parks, churches, schools, prisons, memorial parks, and retreat centers, as well as in backyards.

The labyrinth is not a maze. There are no tricks to it and no dead ends. It has a single circuitous path winding to the center. The person walking it uses the same path to return and the entrance then becomes the exit. The path is in full view, which allows a person to be quiet and internally focused. There are many ways to describe a labyrinth. It is a path of prayer, a walking meditation, a crucible of change, a watering hole for the spirit, and a mirror of the soul. May it serve as one of these, and more for you.

How Do I Walk the Labyrinth?

Generally there are three stages to the walk; releasing on the way in, receiving in the center, and returning back to the world taking what you have received.

To begin, slip off your shoes and use the footlets provided.

Then quiet your voice and quiet your mind and become aware of your breath. Perhaps you will want to focus on a verse of Scripture or a breath prayer. Or you may allow your thoughts to roam freely, in reflection and intercession. Begin walking, and allow yourself to find the pace your body wants to go. Feel free to stop at any time, for prayer and recollecting.

Continue on until you reach the center. Here you may want to wait a bit, sitting, kneeling, or standing, whichever seems best. Do not be in a hurry to leave. Wait. Wait. Wait. With eyes open or shut. Give yourself time to listen.

When the time is right, return along the path you entered, being comfortable to stop along the way as is encouraging. Know that the labyrinth is a two-way street. Those going in will meet those coming out. You may “pass” people or let others step around you. Do what feels natural when you meet. Do your best to allow about one minute before entering the labyrinth behind someone else. And please be as quiet as is reasonable.

There is no right way or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. Use the labyrinth as is helpful. May you be nourished.

