


# Walking the Labyrinth





## What is the Labyrinth?

The classical eleven-circuit labyrinth that you are about to walk is a replica of the design embedded in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France around 1220. It is a sacred place, a spiritual tool meant to awaken us to the deep rhythm that unites us to ourselves and to the Light from within.

Based on the circle, the universal symbol of wholeness and unity, the labyrinth introduces a patterning that builds a sense of relationship... to people, to creation, and to the Divine. It becomes a metaphor for our journey through life.

The labyrinth has a meandering but purposeful path, from the edge to the center and back out again. There is only one path, so there are no tricks or dead ends. As the path winds through the circle, it becomes a mirror for where we are in our lives. So, walk it with an open mind and an open heart; take what you can from it, and leave the rest.



## Approaches to the Labyrinth

There are as many ways to walk the labyrinth as there are people. There is no single “right” way to walk it, but there are three movements or stages to the walk. They are:

- MOVING INWARD *OR* PURGATION
- CENTERING *OR* ILLUMINATION
- MOVING OUTWARD *OR* UNION

You are free to make of them whatever you like, but you might want to try one or more of the following suggestions for each stage:

### MOVING INWARD~PURGATION

A time to cast off, release, let go, discard, divest, unwrap, to quiet and empty the mind.

1. Discard our many roles, and simply say, “I am.”
2. Leave the din, demands, and voices around us; enter a soothing silence.
3. Unload our guilt, failures, shame, depression, and resentment, and forgive ourselves.
4. Set aside all the things we think we want and need, and hope to find what God wants.

5. Leave the familiar world of day-to-day living for a different experience.
6. Choose to ignore all our ideas about God and theological concepts, and seek to become like a child.
7. Reject the anxious desire to get the most out of the labyrinth, and simply be empty and expectant.

CENTERING ~ ILLUMINATION

A time to be open, emptied, expectant, receptive. Stay as long as you like.

1. Take the risk of recognizing an emptiness in ourselves that only love can fill.
2. Enjoy silence, stillness, waiting, and the simplicity of nothing happening.
3. Take time to listen to an inner voice, or to nothing, or to mystery.
4. Contemplate the blessing of the hidden nature of God who cannot be fully known, manipulated, made into an idol, contained or tamed.
5. Consider the possibility of the new, the miraculous, the transfiguring entering our lives.
6. Remember that the Holy Spirit, like the wind, blows where She will.



## MOVING OUTWARD ~ UNION

A time to gain direction, comfort,  
satisfaction, energy, empowerment.

1. Decide to continue a journey deeper into the love of Christ.
2. Refuse to take up again the guilt and self-hatred of the past.
3. Seek a simpler, more focused life.
4. Rest in the knowledge of God's unconditional love.
5. Move away from anxiety toward peace and faith.
6. Seek the direction of the Holy Spirit.



*Participating in the labyrinth is like*  
*... Taking a thoughtful walk*  
*... Going on a symbolic journey*  
*... Taking part in a religious dance*  
*... Looking in a mirror of the soul.*

## Guidelines for Your Walk

- ◆ Please remove your shoes to protect the labyrinth. If it is uncomfortable or difficult for you to walk without your shoes, by all means wear them. You are also welcome to use a cane, walker, or other walking aid.
- ◆ The walk usually takes 20 to 30 minutes. Please allow the person ahead of you to get “into” the labyrinth (about 2 or 3 turns on the path) before you enter.
- ◆ As you enter, try to clear your mind and become aware of your breath.
- ◆ Allow yourself to find the pace that your body wants to go. Your pace is your pace; don't worry about being too fast or too slow. If people in front of you are slower, you are welcome to pass them.
- ◆ Because the labyrinth has only one path, you are likely to meet people on their way out when you are on the way in, and vice versa. Simply step aside to allow another to pass.
- ◆ If you grow tired on the path, simply raise your hand, and a volunteer will bring you a chair.

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