



# LABYRINTH

## What is a Labyrinth?

The labyrinth is a tool for personal, psychological and spiritual transformation. Labyrinths; are currently being used worldwide as a way to quiet the mind, find balance, and encourage meditation, insight and celebration. They are open to people as a non-denominational, cross-cultural tool of well-being. The labyrinth is an ancient symbol that represents wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path from the edge to the center and back out again. A labyrinth is unicursal – it is only one path. The way in is the way out. The path leads you on a circuitous path to the center and out again. At its most basic level, the labyrinth is a metaphor for the journey to the center of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are. The labyrinth; has been described in many beautiful and inspired ways as a path of prayer, a walking meditation, a crucible of change, a watering hole for the spirit, a mirror of the soul, and a spiritual tool meant to awaken us to deep rhythm that unites us to ourselves and to the Light that calls from within.

## Labyrinths and Mazes

Labyrinths and mazes are often confused and yet they're quite different. A maze is like a puzzle that requires solving. It has twists, turns and blind alleys. It's left-brain task that begs logic and analysis to find the correct path in and out. It requires more choices, a more active brain.

By contrast, a labyrinth is right brained. One uses a more passive, receptive mindset. It involves creativity, imagination and intuition. The only choice to be made is whether or not to enter and walk a spiritual path.

## Why Walk?

Labyrinths are walked for many reasons. The labyrinth can help individuals to look deeply into themselves and gain helpful insights. It is a place to celebrate life, an instrument to bring a peaceful moment, or a ritual of remembrance. The labyrinth walk can be a teacher of life and a view to where one is in the process. It is also a tool to pray, guide healing, deepen self-knowledge, insight and empower creativity. Walking can clear the mind and give awareness of the spiritual journey. It urges action, it calms and soothes during times of crisis and transition. Some say that walking the labyrinth helps them to see their lives in the context of a path, a pilgrimage. They realize that they are not human beings on a spiritual path, but spiritual beings on a human path. The walk can give solace to those in deep sorrow, giving comfort to the aching heart and weary soul. The labyrinth gives the gift of physical healing in the form of renewed strength and perspective that is needed when illness has made one vulnerable as well as when giving support to others through illness. The labyrinth walk can help us to pay attention, to listen to our hearts and learn to be present in the moment, to quiet the chatter in our minds long enough to hear what our soul is trying to tell us.

## A Perspective of the Path

One of the Christian images that is played out in the Labyrinth is the “straight and narrow” path. The labyrinth’s path is narrow, but far from straight. The image of the straight and narrow implies we can make mistakes or lose our way. The path is not easy, and we do make mistakes, but none are beyond the mercy of God. Losing our way in life is not only possibility; it is an inevitable experience that is, part of the spiritual path. We often do not realize that the way to God is wide and varied and mistakes are a part of that journey. As soon as we become aware that we are lost, we are already on our way to be found again. The path of the labyrinth is also forgiving. The labyrinth introduces us to the idea of wide and gracious path. It redefines the journey to God: from a vertical perspective that goes from earth up to heaven, to a horizontal perspective in which we are all walking the path together. This straight and direct path to heaven seems to be impossible, as well as a lonely journey. The winding, horizontal path of the labyrinth reminds us not only are we not alone, but also have the magnificent gift of His Grace and mercy. It communicates a generosity about the Divine that we long to hear.

## How to Walk the Labyrinth

There is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth. You can use the labyrinth in any way that meets your needs.

Guidelines: Take a few moments before you enter the labyrinth. Clear your mind. Some like to say a prayer before they begin. Others spend a few minutes focusing on sounds around them or the rhythm of their breath. Isn't it interesting that the word for "breath" is the same as that for "spirit"? As you walk the labyrinth, you are invited to be in the spirit of prayer, meditation, reflection, thanksgiving, searching or play. Contemplate the steps you are taking as you move through the labyrinth. Walk as slowly or quickly as is natural for you. Feel free to pause at any time, and especially as you reach the turns in the path. Be guided by whatever may come to mind. In the silence of meditation often the most profound wisdom will present itself. Often a wonderful sense of peace envelops the walker. What comes to you is right. Each trip is as individual as you are. If others are on the path with you, feel free to pass them or let them step around you. Take time in the center of the labyrinth before beginning your outward journey. As you leave the labyrinth, carry with you insights or blessing you have received. Some find it beneficial to continue their experience through journaling, drawing, or simply sitting in stillness for a while.

### Three stages of the Walk

Many walk the labyrinth in three stages, with the hope for self-knowledge and the knowledge of one's relationship to the Divine.

- Purgation (Releasing) – A releasing, letting go of the detail of our lives. We relinquish the things we try to control. We empty, quiet, humble and surrender our daily concerns.
- Illumination (Receiving); – When reaching the center, stay there. It is a place of meditation and prayer. Receive what is there for you. Here is where people find insight into their problems. You may come to clarity in the center.
- Union (Returning) – Our illumination often produces a grounded, empowered feeling. The walk back out often provides a way to integrate insights gained. Some feel that it stokes the creative fires within, that it energizes those insights. This third stage empowers the seeker to move back out into the world, replenished and directed.



The labyrinth is an ancient pattern found in many cultures around the world. Varied forms have been found; in such diverse locations as Peru, Arizona, Iceland, Crete, Egypt, India and Sumatra. The labyrinth dates back thousands of years. No one knows who created any of the earliest labyrinth designs. These patterns have been found in many forms including carved on rock faces, pottery and tablets, woven into the design of baskets, laid out on the ground with water-worn stones on shore lines and in colored stones or tiles on the floors of churches and cathedrals.

The earliest recognizable labyrinth dates back some 5000 years or so. Small ones, called finger labyrinths, are located in Neolithic caves and as pictographs on “sacred” rocks. The larger labyrinths, those that can be walked, seemed to have emerged during the Classical times of the ancient world. The first labyrinth that could actually be walked; was probably constructed by King Amenemhet III around 1800 BCE at Fayoum in Egypt.

Labyrinths were very popular during medieval times. As many as twenty-two of the eighty Gothic cathedrals housed labyrinths. At times, it was used as a pilgrimage and/or for repentance. One of the most famous labyrinths is the 11-circuit labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral in France, inlaid in the stone floor in 1201.

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 and in mystical Judaism; it is called; the Kabala. Today, labyrinths are making an incredible comeback.

## **Books and Webs**

[www.labyrinthsociety.org](http://www.labyrinthsociety.org)

[www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth](http://www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth)

[www.lessons4living.com/labyrinth](http://www.lessons4living.com/labyrinth)

[www.labyrinthwork.com](http://www.labyrinthwork.com)

Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool  
Lauren Artess  
Putnam Publication Group

Rocklady: The building of a Labyrinth  
Norah Griggs  
Peace Rock Publications

Peace Labyrinth: Sacred Geometry  
Dr. Beatrice Bartnett  
Tuttle Publications

The Sand Meditation at Your Fingertips Labyrinth  
Lauren Artress  
Tuttle Publications

The Way of the Labyrinth: A Powerful Meditation for Everyday Life  
Helen Curry  
Penguin USA

Through the Labyrinth, Designs and meanings over 5,000 years  
Hermann Kern  
Prestel Publications

The Healing Labyrinth: Finding Your Path to Inner Peace  
Helen Raphael Sands  
Barrons Educational Series

Living the Labyrinth: 101 Paths to a Deeper Connection with the Sacred  
Jill Kimberly Harwell Geoffrion  
Pilgrim Press

Praying the Labyrinth: A Journal for Spiritual Exploration  
Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion  
Pilgrim Press

## Labyrinth Applications

### Spiritual Growth

Increase connection with God and inner self.

Metaphor for person's spiritual journey – 3 phases:

Walk to center – shedding, releasing, surrendering

Center – touch light of God

Walk out – integration, carrying Light into the world for service reflection and/or memorization of scripture

Prayer tool

Meditation

Walking the labyrinth is a moving meditation that engages body, mind and spirit through walking.

Stress reduction – balances right and left sides of brain and body

Increases self awareness – people frequently see images, have insights, new perspectives on issues or life patterns.

Supports in finding one's center or becoming centered

Guided meditation and/or journaling can be used before or after walking

Ceremonies

Rites of Passage – Birth, Puberty, Menopause, Marriage, Civil Union, Divorce, Graduation, Death, New job, New House, Retirement, etc

Rituals can be created around any of life's passages using the labyrinth to symbolically move from one phase to another.

Business:

Stress Reduction

Team Building

Creative Problem Solving/Solutions

Transitions

Accessing creativity

Increased productivity

Wellness

Effective Communication

Organizational Development Assessment tool

Clearing Clutter and Finding Balance

Education

Effective Meetings

Creativity

Problem Solving

Education – Math, History, Art, Music, Dance, Architecture, Psychotherapy, Art therapy, Physical therapy, Dance therapy, Music therapy.

Adapted from Spirit Matters, 2000

## Labyrinth meditation scriptures and quotes

1. Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.— Dr. Martin Luther King
2. When our eyes see our hands doing the work of our hearts, the circle of Creation is completed inside us, the doors of our souls fly open and love steps forth to heal every thing in sight.— Michael Bridge
3. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing out so that you may be able to endure it.” - 1 Corinthians 10:13
4. “May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from God's glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Creator” – Colossians 1:11-12a
5. “The LORD is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.” - Exodus 15:2a
6. “But those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” - Isaiah 40:31
7. Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.—Mahatma Gandhi
8. Like water, be gentle and strong. Be gentle enough to follow the natural paths of the earth, and strong enough to rise up and reshape the world.— Brenda Peterson
9. The best things in life are nearest: Breath in your nostrils, light in your eyes, flowers at your feet, duties at your hand, the path of right just before you. Then do not grasp at the stars, but do life's plain, common work as it comes, certain that daily duties and daily bread are the sweetest things in life.— Robert Louis Stevenson
10. Even though you may want to move forward in your life, you may have one foot on the brakes. In order to be free, we must learn how to let go. Release the hurt. Release the fear. Refuse to entertain your old pain. The energy it takes to hang onto the past is holding you back from a new life. What is it you would let go of today? - Mary Manin Morrissey
11. There is nothing that makes us love someone so much as praying for them.— William Law
12. If thou could'st empty all thyself of self, like to a shell dishabited. Then might He find thee on the ocean's shelf, and say – this is not dead – and fill thee with Himself instead.—T.E. Brown
13. What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.— Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Discovering Disciples

First Christian Church  
Disciples of Christ  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

The mission of the family of First Christian Church is to encourage all people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ and nurture them in their journey with Him.

- We find our unity in Christ as Savior.
- We are Bible-based in thoughts and life.
- We have the freedom to differ in opinion
- We encourage all to read and interpret God's word.
- We believe in helping others in need at home and around the world.
- We own our buildings, determine our ministries and select our clergy.
- We believe every member has gifts to share in ministry and leadership.
- We value cooperation among all Christians and churches.
- We celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday.
- We teach and practice baptism by immersion while accepting other forms of baptism.

Worship with us!

Sunday traditional worship at 8:15 and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday school for all ages at 9:30 a.m.

Nursery available

Faith and Friends Youth Group 6:00 p.m.

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Teen Lighthouse Tuesdays 6:00-9:00 p.m.

A variety of small groups are available throughout the week.

Reverend Charles (Chuck) Blaisdell  
Senior Pastor  
Reverend Katherine Raley  
Associate Pastor

719-633-8888  
[www.firstchristiancos.org](http://www.firstchristiancos.org)  
16 East Platte Avenue  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903