

## *The Labyrinth*

*Walking the labyrinth, an ancient metaphor for one's spiritual journey, helps in quieting the mind, and opening the soul. The Labyrinth is one continuous path so there are no tricks to it and no dead ends. The path weaving throughout this wonderful tool is like a mirror reflecting where we are in our lives; it touches our sorrows and releases our joys. So walk one with an open mind and an open heart. The labyrinth has a threefold structure.*

*First stepping in and waling towards its center is a releasing, letting go, and focusing on what you want to be healed or made whole. It is a quieting of the mind. Second is the time you spend in the center. It is an awareness of the issue at hand which gives you an opportunity for prayer, quiet reflection, tears, joy or whatever wells up from inside your being. Stay there as long as you want and receive what is there for you to receive. It is a time for surrendering. Third is when you follow the same path out retracing your steps, joining with your higher Power, and the healing forces at work in the world. Each time you experience the labyrinth you become more empowered to understand and accept it as a wonderful addition to your prayer life. The finger labyrinth offers all the same opportunities for those who are unable, or don't have the availability to physically walk a labyrinth. It also is a way to have your own personal labyrinth with you always and it truly is an object of beauty to add to your environment.*

## **Labyrinth Trivia**

**Did you know...** that Swedish fishers built labyrinths and then journeyed to the center in hopes of ensuring fair weather and a good catch?

**Did you know...** that the Nazcans of Peru etched labyrinths into the desert floor in proportions so enormous they can only be appreciated from an airplane?

**Did you know...** that the Hopi and O'odahm of what is now southern Arizona wove labyrinths into baskets and blankets for ceremonial purposes and everyday use?

**Did you know...** medieval Christians followed them on the floors of the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe, and thought of the journey to Jerusalem?

**Did you know...** that Labyrinths exist on nearly every continent and in nearly every major culture and system of religious belief, and have since antiquity?

**Did you know...** that from the onset of the Age of Reason, Christianity generally discounted labyrinths as relics of superstition, left over from a less enlightened time?

**Did you know...** that as Christianity rediscovers the importance of spiritual discipline, labyrinths have reemerged as a resource for prayer and meditation?

\*Horizons Magazine. *The Labyrinth – Take a Walk on the Spiritual Side*, Lynn Penny, July/Aug. 1998

**Approaches to the Labyrinth**  
*Participating in the labyrinth is like*  
*Taking a thoughtful walk*  
*Going on a symbolic journey or pilgrimage*  
*Taking part in a religious dance*

There are three movements to the labyrinth, and you are free to make of them whatever you like:

***Moving Inward***

***Centering***

***Moving Outward***

Please use these suggestions if you find them appropriate. You might want to select one from each movement and try it, or create your own rhythm to each of the movements. Using all the suggestions at once is overwhelming.

**Moving Inward**

*(A time to cast off, discard, divest, unwrap, forget)*

1. Discard our many roles (mother, father, wife, husband, sister, brother, student, accountant, teacher, pastor) and simply say "I am."
2. Leave the noise, demands, voices around us, and enter a soothing silence.
3. Unload our guilt, resentment, self-hatred, failures, depression, shame, and forgive ourselves.
4. Set aside all the things we think we want and need, hoping 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 theology, and return to the beginning of our faith.
7. Reject the anxious desire to get the most out of the labyrinth, simply becoming open and expectant.

## **Centering**

*(A time to be open, expectant, empty, naked, and receptive, as though we were receiving a gift)*

1. Take the risk of recognizing an emptiness within ourselves that only love can fill.
2. Enjoy the 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, cannot be manipulated, cannot be made into an idol, cannot be pinned down, 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**

*(A time to gain direction, satisfaction, comfort, and new energy)*

1. Decide to continue a journey deeper into the love of Christ.
2. Refuse to take up again the guilt and hatred of the past.
3. Seek a simpler and 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.

## TAKE A TRIP WITH GOD

(Ask four questions of the verse you are reading)

1. **THANKS:** What in this verse makes me thankful?
2. **REGRET:** What in this verse causes me regret?
3. **INTERCESSION**(prayer): What does this text lead me to prayer for?
4. **PLAN OF ACTION:** What action does this text encourage me to take today?

# Practicing the TRIP pattern with John 15:4

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.” John 15:4

**Thanks:** I thank you, Lord, that I am in you. And you have chosen to live in me. You want me to be fruitful in my life with you. I am able to look forward to your will being done in me because you are in me. Because you are in me, I have hope.

**Regret:** I regret that I try to go it alone without asking your help.

**Intercession:** I pray, Lord, for help in turning one thing I try to do alone over to you. (Be specific and identify the one thing you want God to carry today.)

**Plan of Action:** Today, any time I am inclined to take back what I turned over to you, I will say, “It’s your, God, not mine.” As you use the T.R.I.P/ questions, notice how they work together. One response leads to the next question. In this way you give the Holy Spirit room to apply the Word to your life each day. You take a “trip” with the Spirit’s leading. Be sure to write as much as you can for the **THANKS** answer. Be creative. Limit your **REGRET** response to one thing. Be sure it is connected to what you wrote in the **THANKS** response. If you can share what you wrote with a friend, use the **INTERCESSION** to pray for the one specific need identified as well as other concerns you have. For some texts, it is difficult to clearly identify a **PURPOSE**. Be sure to write the first three responses for every text.

## **Twelve Reasons to Have a Church Labyrinth**

1. **The Labyrinth is Evangelistic.** Labyrinth is a tool to reach people who don't relate to the church as an institution.
2. **The Labyrinth is Traditional.** It dates back 5000 years. It is a bridge, which connects us back to the Middle Ages when Christians adopted the labyrinth as a symbol and then imbued it with specifically Christian meaning.
3. **The Labyrinth is Contemporary.** In an ecumenical, post denominational environment, post-modern world, the labyrinth fits right into this picture of being generic and non-dogmatic.
4. **Labyrinth walking is a Spiritual practice.** The labyrinth is a spiritual tool and we learn how to use and experience its benefits the more we practice
5. **The Labyrinth is Physical.** It is a form of body prayer. Stress reducer. Saint Augustine is often quoted as having said, "It is solved by walking." Labyrinth walking has been called the laying on of feet.
6. **The Labyrinth is a Form of Pilgrimage.** Pilgrimage is an outer journey with an inner purpose. Takes us away from the routine of daily life to sacred places. It organizes our experience and engages us in spiritual travel.
7. **The Labyrinth is a Spiritual Aid.** As with a glass, the labyrinth is a container. It is a road map, a menu. Drinking the water, taking the journey, or eating the meal is up to us. We should not confuse the tool with the purpose.
8. **The Labyrinth is an aid for moving beyond the mind.** Every religious tradition has some ritual or technique to take us past our thinking mind. IT is a non-verbal experience which helps to clear the mind so that we can listen to the still small voice of God within.

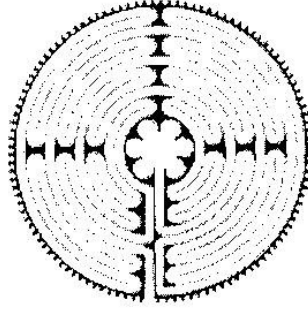
9. **The labyrinth experience is further expanded when walked outdoors.** In our modern society it is easy to lose connection between nature and spiritual growth....Walking an outdoor labyrinth incorporates these aspects.
10. **Labyrinths build community.** When walked with others a joining takes place. Community is formed. Labyrinth challenges the image of life being a lonely, hazardous journey through a maze. There is room within unity for a considerable amount of diversity and divergence. Donna Schaper writes, "The labyrinth lets people walk together separately without agreeing on anything."
11. **The Labyrinth is a time to listen.** When listening, we can learn. We can discover. Within listening there is an element of surrender that takes us out of time and space. Some call it Holy listening.
12. **The Labyrinth answers our call for help.** "Walking the Labyrinth is not about escaping into the center and leaving the world, it is about experience the Spirit in the center so that you can live in the world in a more blessed way." (Donna Schaper)

Written by Robert Ferre

Labyrinth Enterprises: The World's Leading Full-Service Resource for Labyrinths

<http://www.Labyrinth-enterprises.com/12reasons.html>





## **LABYRINTH RESOURCES**

The Prayer Path: A Christ-Centered Labyrinth Experience – a multimedia experience by Group Publishing. [www.grouppublishing.com/prayerpath/description.htm](http://www.grouppublishing.com/prayerpath/description.htm)

Paths of Peace Labyrinths and Resources – labyrinth design, installation, sales, and rental, workshops, presentations, products, and retreats

Lisa Gidlow Moriarty, owner/designer

PO Box 701

Stillwater, MN 55082

612-747-7446

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

Eastern North Dakota Synod Office Resource Center – large canvas labyrinth, books, and other resources on labyrinths

Veriditas – The World-Wide Labyrinth Project – information and a labyrinth locator  
<http://www.veriditas.net/>

Grace Cathedral <http://www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth/>

Labyrinth-Enterprises, (800) 873-9873

[www.labyrinth-enterprises.com/12reasons.html](http://www.labyrinth-enterprises.com/12reasons.html)

## Labyrinth Ideas/Suggestions

Place colorful scarves or fabric remnants around the perimeter for people to use as head covers, prayer shawls, for dancing, etc.

Provide blank paper and pencils for journaling, and/or art materials such as crayons, colored pencils and markers, to process the labyrinth experience.

Play soft background music during the labyrinth event. Music that is instrumental or has chanting or other indistinguishable words works best to soothe, but not interfere with contemplative experiences.

Live music – harp, flute, guitar, piano etc. can create an especially wonderful experience.

Musical instruments, drums, chimes (even small windchimes), bells, rattles and shakers, can be provided for random use in a fun, celebratory labyrinth event.

Place a bowl of water or holy water near the entrance.

Place floor pillows and finger labyrinths around the room or around the perimeter of the labyrinth.

Provide chairs for people to sit as silent witnesses to other walkers. Watching can be as soothing as walking.

Have attendees write prayers on small slips of paper and carry the prayers to the center to be placed in a bowl or basket there. Or do the same, but writing something they wish to let go or release. As an additional burning bowl ceremony, these papers can be disposed of afterward outside in a safe container.

Dim the lights and walk in low light. Try candlelight, being careful to place the candles far enough away and in safe containers so as not to risk dripping or spilling wax on the labyrinth or igniting loose clothing.

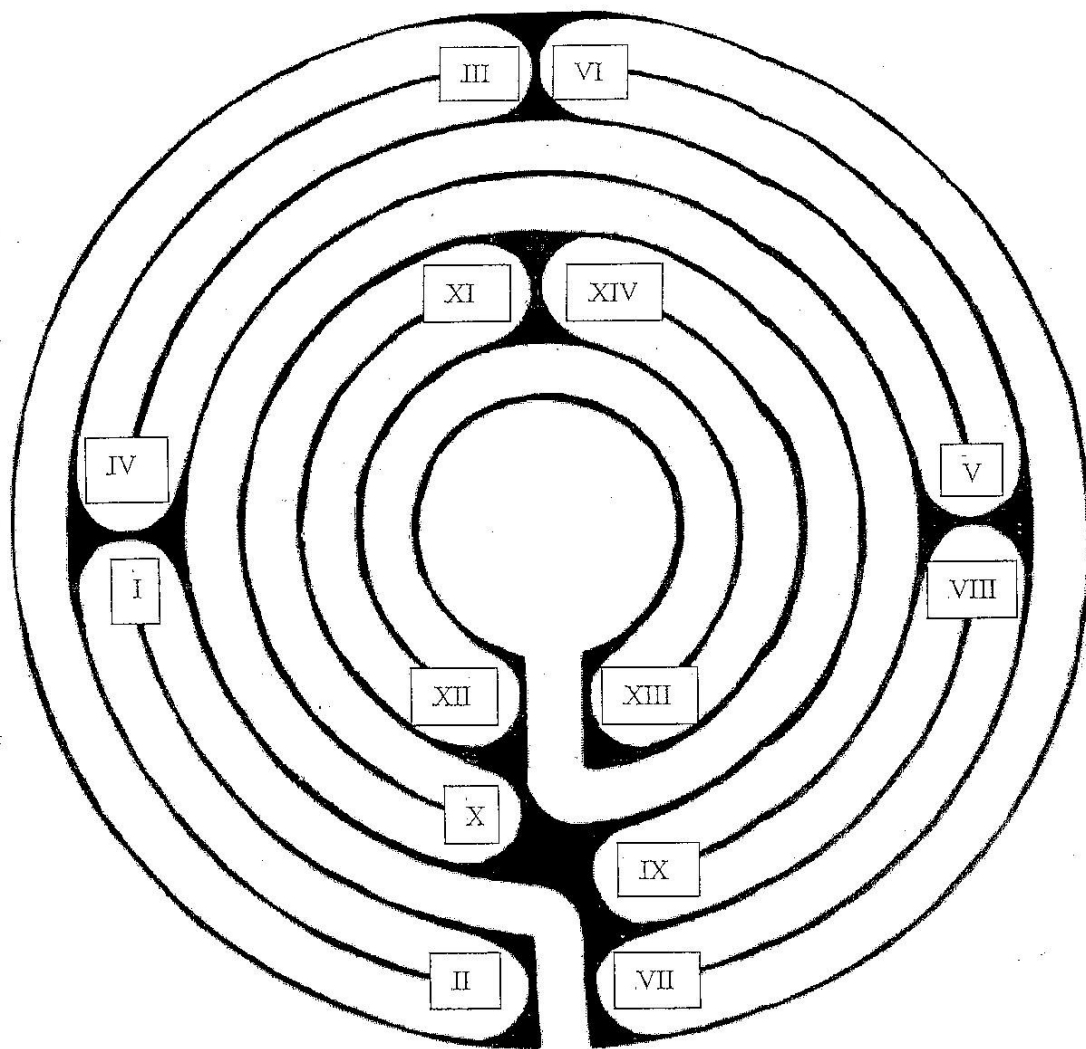
Walk in pairs holding hands, one leading another; or with hands on the shoulders of the person in front. The person being led could try walking with eyes closed – being led in blind faith.

Dance, run, skip, cartwheel. Children especially enjoy playing on the labyrinth – consider creating a time when this is invited. But also teach the children to use the labyrinth as a quiet prayer tool and to respect others who are doing so.

Try Taize music or other familiar, repetitive chants; or short prayers or psalms repeated.

Allow time to process the experience as a group – so anyone wishing to share thoughts about their experience may do so, but not requiring disclosure.

Create a themed walk for a particular event – a forgiveness walk, a walk honoring mothers, a graduation walk, a walk for World Hunger. Use Biblical themes of pilgrimage, paths, guidance. Or a church season or festival day – Advent, Lent, Pentecost (using red, yellow, orange flowing scarves to twirl and dance in the air), All Saints Day (lighting perimeter candles in memory of departed loved ones and carrying loving memories into the center of the labyrinth). These are just a few ideas– use your imagination and be creative!



**Stations of the Cross Meditations  
on the Circle of Peace Labyrinth**

## Scriptural Stations of the Cross and the Labyrinth

**Stations of the Cross** -From early Christianity, when pilgrims came to Jerusalem, they visited sites where Jesus was known to have been. Eventually, following in the footsteps of Christ, along the way of the cross, became a part of the pilgrimage visit. The traditional stations came about during the crusades, when it was no longer safe to visit the holy sites. In the 1500's, villages in Europe created "replicas" of the way of the cross, commemorating the places along the route in Jerusalem. Eventually, the traditional set of 14 stations was placed in almost every Catholic Church in the world.

These "Scriptural Stations" are based on those introduced by Pope John Paul II on Good Friday, 1991, and are presented as an alternative to the traditional stations and as a way of reflecting on the Scriptural accounts of Christ's passion. Each station represents an event in the passion and death of Our Lord as recorded in the Gospel. Drawing on the Gospel accounts emphasizes the reality of the events of Christ's suffering and death. Five of the traditional stations were omitted and five actual Gospel events were included.

**The Labyrinth** - Historically, Christian use of the Labyrinth pre-dates the Stations by more than a thousand years. The first documented Christian labyrinth dates to 324 AD in Algiers, Northern Africa. The famous Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth was constructed around 1200 AD in the stone floor of Cathedral in Chartres, France. Medieval Christians visited Chartres and other cathedrals of northern Europe and likely walked the labyrinth as an alternative to taking a hazardous pilgrimage to Jerusalem to walk in the "footsteps of Christ." Today 21<sup>st</sup> century "pilgrims" walk the Labyrinth path as one of many tools to enhance prayer, contemplation, meditation, and personal or spiritual growth. Walking the labyrinth in a Stations of the Cross meditation offers a pilgrimage, and an opportunity to experience the passion of Christ on a personal level in an ancient, yet contemporary way.

**The Circle of Peace** is a contemporary labyrinth design based on ancient labyrinth patterns. It is unique in that it has fourteen 180 degree turns, making it especially appropriate for Stations of the Cross meditations.

### **Instructions for the Pilgrimage:**

- Please remove your shoes and walk the path in silence.
- Move at your own pace. You may pass others as necessary.
- As an alternative to walking the canvas labyrinth, you may perform this pilgrimage by following the pathway of the attached paper labyrinth with your finger.
- The 14 Stations are located at each of the 180 degree turns and are indicated with Roman Numerals.
- At each station, pause, read the appropriate passage and prayer. Continue on your pilgrimage when you are ready. Spend as much time at each station as you choose.
- When you have completed the 14<sup>th</sup> (XIV) station, proceed to the Center to pray the final prayer and to reflect. Then, continue with the traditional labyrinth walk, by retracing your path out of the labyrinth in further reflection or walk directly out from the center along the entrance paths.

**OPENING PRAYER:**

God of power and mercy, in love you sent your Son that we might be cleansed of sin and live with you forever. Bless us as we reflect on his suffering and death that we may learn from his example the way we should go. We ask this through that same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**I. First Station: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane**

*Scripture:* Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

*Matthew 25:36-41*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us your strength and wisdom, that we may seek to follow your will in all things

**II. Second Station: Jesus, Betrayed by Judas, is Arrested**

*Scripture:* Then, while [Jesus] was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "the man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely." He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. *Mark 14: 43-46*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us the courage of our convictions that our lives may faithfully reflect the good news you bring.

**III. Third Station: Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin**

*Scripture:* When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth." *Luke 22: 66-71*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us your sense of righteousness that we may never cease to work to bring about the justice of the kingdom that you promised.

**IV. Fourth Station: Jesus is Denied by Peter**

*Scripture:* Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly. *Matthew 26: 69-75*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us the gift of honesty that we may not fear to speak the truth even when difficult.

**V. Fifth Station: Jesus is Judged by Pilate**

*Scripture:* The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barrabas... [and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified. *Mark 15: 1-5, 15*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us discernment that we may see as you see, not as the world sees.

**VI. Sixth Station: Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns**

*Scripture:* Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. *John 19:1-3*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us patience in times of suffering that we may offer our lives as a sacrifice of praise.

**VII. Seventh Station: Jesus Bears the Cross**

*Scripture:* When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." ... They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. *John 19: 6, 15-17*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us strength of purpose that we may faithfully bear our crosses each day.

**VIII. Eighth Station: Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross**

*Scripture:* They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. *Mark 15: 21*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us willing spirits that we may be your instruments on earth.

**IX. Ninth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**

*Scripture:* A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' At that time, people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?" *Luke 23: 27-31*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us gentle spirits that we may comfort those who mourn.

**X. Tenth Station: Jesus is Crucified**

*Scripture:* When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."] *Luke 23: 33-34*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us merciful hearts that we may bring your reconciliation and forgiveness to all.

**XI. Eleventh Station: Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief**

*Scripture:* Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." *Luke 23: 39-43*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us perseverance that we may never stop seeking you.

**XII. Twelfth Station: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Disciple**

*Scripture:* Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. *John 19: 25-27*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us constancy that we may be willing to stand by those in need.

**XIII. Thirteenth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross**

*Scripture:* It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last. *Luke 23: 44-46*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us trust in you that when our time on earth is ended our spirits may come to you without delay.

**XIV. Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb**

*Scripture:* When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. *Matthew 27: 57-60*

*Prayer:* Lord, grant us your compassion that we may always provide for those in need.

Walk into the center of the labyrinth for the final prayer.

**FINAL PRAYER (upon reaching the center of the labyrinth):**

*Prayer:* Lord Jesus Christ, your passion and death is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to you. May we who have faithfully reflected on these mysteries follow in your steps and so come to share your glory in heaven where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Scripture excerpts are taken from the New American Bible with Revised New Testament  
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Three Stages for Walking – Parallels to the movement of liturgy as we worship. Sunday worship – liturgy means, “work of the people”. It is meant to reflect the faith journey of our lives; the rhythm we live – the labyrinth walk is similar with the same quality and movement. It is metaphorical of our lives on many levels.

1. Going In – Moving Inward. Sometimes Called: entry, release, purgation, discarding, casting off, divesting, unwrapping, forgetting. It is a deliberate quieting of the mind, letting go of concerns that you bring with so as to create a space within to meet God.
  - Liturgy – Prelude, opening music – prayer – confession. It is the way in liturgy that we prepare our hearts and minds.
2. The Center – Sometimes called: The place of “illumination”. A quiet time to reflect, receive, consciously address a concern that has come to mind along the way. Can be a time of receiving/ exp. God’s grace.
  - Liturgy – Holds communion as the centerpiece, or fed with scripture and preaching. Receiving God’s benefits.
3. Leaving – Sometimes called: moving outward. Following the path back out with insights, changes in attitudes, or experiences that you bring back into the world with you.
  - Liturgy – Our prayers of the people, benediction and sending back out into our daily lives.



## **SPIRITUAL TOOLS**

**Lauren Artress' book:** Walking a sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a **spiritual tool**.

### **Spiritual Tool:**

**Ask:** What are some spiritual tools we use in church?

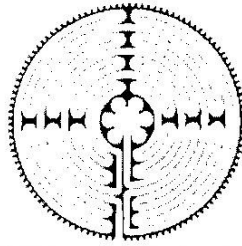
\*candles    \*candles    \*pulpit    \*music    \*instruments  
\*vestments    \*paraments    \*bible    \*stained glass Windows  
\*Icons    \*banners    \*sacraments

**Ask:** What are some spiritual tools we use outside of church?

\*candles    \*incense/oils    \*devotional books    \*music  
\*journal    \*meditation  
\*Outdoor spaces – lake, woods, silence,  
\*kneeling    \*bible    \*making sign of cross/ rosary or prayer beads  
\*folding hands

**Definition of Spiritual Tool:** I would define it as a symbol or means of facilitating our relationship/conversation with God and other people of faith.

**Labyrinth:** One more spiritual tool that helps connect us to the heart of God, and helps facilitate our prayer life.



### Walking the Labyrinth

Exodus 3:5 - *"Take off your shoes – the ground where you are standing is holy."*

**\* Please remove your shoes on the indoor floor labyrinth.  
Removing shoes is in acknowledgement of a sacred rite.**

- **Pause:** Pause at the entryway. Allow yourself to be fully conscious of the act of stepping into the labyrinth. Allow about a minute, or several turns on the path, to lapse in between you and the person in front of you. Some ritual act, blessing with water, sign of the cross, a bow, may feel appropriate to begin. Do what comes naturally.
- **Follow your pace:** Allow your body to determine pace. If you have a rapid pace and the person in front of you is moving slower, feel free to move around this person. This is easiest to do at the turns by turning earlier.
- **The narrow path is a two way street:** When meeting someone on the path, simply pass to the right.
- **Don't try to predict your experience:** Receive what is there for you.
- **You may want to repeat a particular prayer, Bible verse, or poem to yourself as you walk:** Paying attention to breathing in 1-2-3, breathing out 1-2-3 is helpful for meditation.

## Traditional 11-Circuit Labyrinth

Labyrinths are more than 3,500 years old and are found in many ancient cultures. This traditional pattern is adapted from the famous mosaic found on the floor of the Chartre Cathedral built in 1201. Based on the sacred geometry known to many esoteric societies such as the Knights Templars, people have made pilgrimages to labyrinths for centuries. The spiral pattern is a symbol of change, growth, and the never-ending patterns of life.

The labyrinth is a sacred tool for your own journey of inner discovery. You may use this tool as a metaphor for your own spiritual path.

Working with the labyrinth can be as simple as focusing quietly while tracing the grooved pattern with your finger from the outside opening to the center, pausing in the center, then retracing the path back to the start. Open your heart and thoughts to feelings, insights or visions, which may present themselves to you. Use candlelight and peaceful music if this is helpful. Be patient, relax your body. If you wish to focus on a specific issue or question, pause at the center of the labyrinth for a longer time. Sometimes the answers will come later, perhaps in a dream.

The labyrinth is a tool for healing, relaxation, promoting creativity, soothing grief, stimulating intuition, integrating the mind-body-spirit, and deepening spirituality. There are three stages to the process.

I. Initiation: You begin to trace the pattern, release your cares and open yourself to receiving.

II. Invocation: moving to the center, you call forth your inner wisdom and higher power.

III. Integration: The lessons you seek will seep into your subconscious mind while you move back out from the center.

Keep your labyrinth in sight on a table to remind you to make quiet space in your busy life.

### Additional Resources:

*Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*  
By Dr. Lauren Artress \$ 11.00

*Exploring the Labyrinth: A Guide for Healing and Spiritual Growth*  
By Melissa Gayle West \$ 15.00

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