

4) Implementation - This stage represents your life outside the labyrinth; the world where your experience or illumination is carried into and affects your everyday life.

Other Approaches To The Walk

Intentional walks – a specific intention, issue or concern is addressed during the walk.

Intercessory walks – prayers are made for people or needs; perhaps a prayer is offered for a different person at each turn on the path.

Meditative walks – meditate is made on a specific word or passage, or pray is repetitively offered, such as the “Jesus prayer” (Lord Have Mercy...) or the universal prayer for world peace (Let Peace Prevail on Earth!).

The Labyrinth



Chartres Labyrinth

What is a Labyrinth?

Labyrinths are described by how many concentric circuits or paths they contain.

The labyrinth is **ALL denominational** – all faiths are welcome.

A labyrinth is a pattern found in all ancient cultures of the world, some dating back 3,500 years. The Chartres, an 11-circuit Labyrinth, was constructed around 1201 AD in the stone floor of Chartres Cathedral in France. Medieval Christians visited Chartres (and other cathedrals) and walked the labyrinth as an alternative to taking a hazardous pilgrimage to Jerusalem to walk in the "foot steps of Christ." Modern "pilgrims" walk the labyrinthine path as one of many tools to enhance prayer, contemplation, meditation, and/or personal growth.

A labyrinth is the opposite of a maze, as mazes have many paths and dead-ends. The maze is about multiplicity, choice and strategy, a path of the mind, whereas the single path of a labyrinth is about guidance, trust and reflection, a path of the heart. Its allure may be simply that its one track path implies that there is a way through the wilderness of our stressed-filled lives. It offers the hope of order in our disordered world.

There are no tricks or challenges to the walk, you simply enter and exit at the same spot. After you enter, you walk the circles which meander throughout the whole circle, getting close to the center, and then going to the outer edge only to wind your way back to the center again. The center of the labyrinth contains a rosette with 6 petals. The first petal represents the first stage of creation, the mineral kingdom. The second stands for the second state of creation - the vegetable kingdom. The third is the animal kingdom. The fourth petal is human creation. The fifth is the angelic realm and the sixth petal is labeled THE UNKNOWN .

Why Would I Use A Labyrinth?

Many community organizations, churches and retreat centers are making labyrinth walks available for public use for prayer, meditation, contemplation or personal growth. The labyrinth walk is popular with a growing number of people because of its simplicity and the ability to approach its paths on your own terms; helping you find a path through the confusion and chaos of daily life. By surrendering to the winding path one's soul finds healing and wholeness.

The Walk

There is not a "required way" to walk the labyrinth. The beauty of the labyrinth is that people can approach the experience on their individual needs. During the entire walk you spend time with the Spirit in silence, listening for answers to the questions you brought into the labyrinth.

- 1) Entering** - The walk into the labyrinth is known entering (also referred to as shedding or purgation.) During this stage you walk the path toward the center, and should try to acquire a relaxed, peaceful state, temporarily release concerns and quiet the mind.
- 2) Illumination** - The time in the center. This is a time of openness and peacefulness; you experience, learn, or receive what this unique moment offers. Take your time.
- 3) Union** - The journey outward. You choose when to leave the center, following the same path. This is a time to review and consider what occurred in the center and how it may be applied in your life.