



The Labyrinth is a contemplative way of praying with our feet. We see the Labyrinth in Greek and Roman architecture from thousands of years ago, and has been used in many traditions including Christianity. The labyrinth is an excellent tool for prayer because it is a physical experience that emulates the interior journey of being human. The labyrinth is meant to lead a person, while a maze is meant to confuse. There are no dead ends, only a circuitous path that leads to the centre and back out the same way.

Made popular in the middle ages, labyrinths were built into churches as a way to support the practice of pilgrimage for those people who could not travel to Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago, Assisi, and other pilgrim destinations. The most popular is the one located in the Chartes Cathedral south of Paris.

The Labyrinth can be used as a tool of meditation, discernment, reflection, surrender, gratitude, and can be used as a solitary experience, or with a small group. “You can never step into the same river twice” (Peraclytis), and so it is true with walking the labyrinth. You can come back to it again and again.

- To begin, stand at the entrance to the labyrinth and remember that this path is not something to achieve or accomplish, but to experience.
- If possible and appropriate, take off your shoes. It is both is a symbol that every step you take is on holy ground, and it also enables you to feel the path in a very physical way.
- Take three deep centering belly breaths. If you can maintain this deep breathing while you walk, you activate your parasympathetic nervous systems (rest, digest, heal) vrs. your sympathetic (fight, flight, freeze).
- Let the Labyrinth walk/prayer unfold naturally. Here are some ideas to help you focus and bring intention to your walk:
 - On the way into the centre, think about “letting go” On the way back out focus on receiving. You may want to walk with your hands open and at your side.
 - Find a mantra, word, or verse and recite it over and over again while you walk.
 - Focus on your breath – use your breath to communicate a prayer without words. (longing, contentment, thanksgiving)
 - Walk with a question you have. Hold the question in your mind as you walk. You may want to carry a stone as a symbol.
 - Create an intention for your walk. In what style and spirit would you like to walk with God (this may influence your pace)
- When you reach the centre, take a moment. Do what feels natural. Perhaps you will bow, kneel and prostate yourself, or look in all four direction (North, East, South West) over the path you just walked and are about to return on.
- If you walking with others, keep your gaze to yourself, and let others pass slowly and quietly by.
- Find one near you: LabyrinthNetwork.ca and LabyrinthLocator.com