

Walking the Labyrinth: a spiritual discipline

Walking the labyrinth can be a metaphor for life—a journey of letting go, discovering inner peace, and opening oneself to spiritual transformation. It calms the mind and soothes the heart, offering a space for personal reflection and renewal. For some, the walk stirs creativity or evokes a sense of wholeness, while for others, it is a source of healing and hope in times of sorrow. Whatever your experience, the labyrinth invites you to bring your unique hopes, dreams, and personal history into this sacred journey.

Suggestions for Walking the Labyrinth

There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. Whether serious or playful, prayerful or meditative, your walk can reflect your intentions and needs. As you enter, quiet your mind, find your pace, and let the path guide you. The labyrinth invites you to surrender control by simply walking the path that is before you. Try to undertake this spiritual journey with an open heart and open mind.

Helpful Guidelines:

- Before beginning, quiet your mind and become aware of your breathing.
- Allow yourself to find the pace your body wants to go.
- Pass others if needed or let them step around you.
- The path has two ways—those entering will meet those exiting.
- Do what feels natural and be considerate of others.

One Common Way to walk the labyrinth is by thinking of the walk in three stages.

- **Walking Toward the Center: Purgation (Releasing)** As you walk toward the center, release the details of your life, letting go of distractions. This stage quiets the mind and opens the heart.
- **At the Center: Illumination (Receiving)** The center is a place where you open yourself to God's wisdom and presence. Stay as long as you wish, you might sit for a while, and pray or just rest, and receive whatever insight, peace, or inspiration may arise.
- **Returning from the Center: Union (Returning)** As you exit, follow the same path back, integrating what you've received. Leave the labyrinth feeling renewed and ready to carry your insights into daily life.

Other Ways to Walk the Labyrinth

- **Choose a Spiritual Companion:** Walk with the memory of this person, perhaps it is an ancestor/relative, a friend, a loved one, or a spiritual guide in your heart.
- **Repetition:** Repeat a prayer, a song, or a scripture passage. Let it become a mantra for you as you walk the path.
- **Letting Go:** Release a burden or worry as you walk, and leave it at the center. Some people walk with clenched fists as they enter the labyrinth and contemplate the things they are holding onto too tightly. Try to keep your fists clenched until you reach the center, take a pause, and release your clenched fists. Once your hands are open and you have finished contemplating what it is like to release these burdens to God, offer a prayer of thanks for your relationship with God and others. As you exit the labyrinth, contemplate how you are freed to return unburdened.
- **Express Gratitude:** Use your walk as a moment to offer thanks for life's blessings.
- **Reflect on Life's Journey:** Use the labyrinth walk to consider your path in life.
- **Keep a Journal:** Reflect on your labyrinth walk afterward to capture insights, thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Finger Labyrinth

If you are not inclined to walk the Labyrinth, you can trace this Labyrinth with your finger, contemplating the guides for walking the labyrinth on the other side of this page.

