

Joy Walk with Children

The labyrinth is often approached with a very serious attitude. It also can be used in a joyous manner. It can be a place of celebration (children instinctively know this.) A planned *Joy Walk* can enliven a labyrinth experience.

- Play a rhythmic music CD such as Mickey Hart's *Planet Drum*.
- Give some of the participants children's musical instruments such as bells, rattles, tambourines, and drums.
- Give some of the participants colorful scarves.
- Give some of the participants small bottles filled with a bubble blowing mixture and a wand for blowing bubbles.

With the music playing the "bubble blowers" surround the labyrinth. Their task is to blow as many bubbles as they can to the labyrinth walkers who are making music or waving their scarves as they walk into and out of the labyrinth. When a walker completes the labyrinth, places are exchanged with a "bubble blower" who now takes the scarf or musical instrument and joyously walks the labyrinth. People always have fun and lessons are learned. One lesson is of spontaneous giving. The "bubble blowers" in their role want to insure that everyone has a good bubble experience while the musicians want to return music for the gift of bubbles. Everyone is giving to the others so that all will have fun.

Christmas

"Following of the Star." As the wisemen and shepherds were guided by a star in their spiritual quest, so we can follow a light in our search for spiritual awakening and rebirth. This is a candle-light experience. At the center of the labyrinth set a lantern with star shaped holes through which the light shines. One person or more gather at the entrance and are given unlit candles that they carry into the center. The candles are lighted at the star lantern and then slowly brought out of the labyrinth as a symbol of the light of spiritual enlivening.

Ritual of Goodbye (Group activity)

A group gathers in front of the Labyrinth. The person leaving walks in first. Others follow after he/she completes the first circuit; they each enter about one minute apart, separating the walkers. When the person arrives in the center, he/she has time alone as he/she waits. One by one others enters the center with him/her and have a few moments to say a private goodbye. They then turn and slowly walk out. After the last goodbye, the person walks back out of the labyrinth to a group hug. This is a very meaningful and emotional experience. The labyrinth becomes the container for the emotions of parting and provide a safe and sacred place to share those feelings. Such a ritual would work as well for saying, "Hello." It would be a warm welcome into any group.

Information gathered from: www.lessons4living.com and www.labyrinthsociety.org

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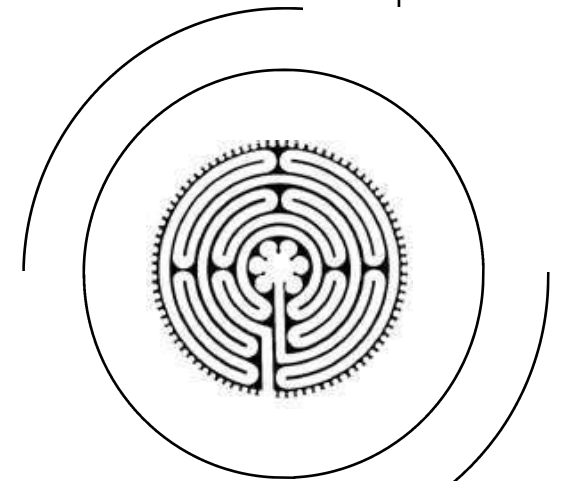
Finger Labyrinths to take along

Bumper Stickers

Labyrinth Stones



The Labyrinth at Unity Church



At the lower level behind the church

927 Wertzville Road, Enola Pa 17025
717-732-9773
www.unitychurchpa.org

What is a Labyrinth?

The best known example of a labyrinth is embedded in the stone pavement of Chartres Cathedral near Paris. Around 1230, as the Cathedral of Chartres was being built, a large labyrinth forty feet across was set with blue and white stones into the floor of the nave of the church. Similar labyrinths were placed in other French Gothic cathedrals.

Like all cathedral labyrinths, it draws upon the ancient northern Celtic, middle eastern, and Classical Greek and Roman origins of the Christian faith. The Medieval builders were careful to incorporate their understanding of sacred architecture into the design and location of the labyrinths.

These labyrinths were all laid out according to the same basic pattern: a single meandering path which slowly leads one to the center. The path twists and turns sometimes takes you towards to the center but then takes you away from the center. The path eventually leads to the center. It is then followed exactly the same to the exit.

The Labyrinth used to be 'walked' (often on the knees) in place of the actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It was a holy experience. If you walk the labyrinth with the full dedication of a pilgrim, you won't be the same anymore upon exiting: the old you will be grounded at the threshold stone and a purified you will emerge, ready to tackle new directions in your life's journey.



Ways to Walk the Labyrinth

Journey of Life

The most basic metaphor for walking a labyrinth is that of Life's Journey. Walk the labyrinth while mindful of your life. Envision your life's goal. Walk to your destiny and see what you learn. Pay attention to the sights and sounds. Do you feel lost at any time? If so, where in the labyrinth did it occur? What does that mean? Do you like one part of the labyrinth more than another? Why? What do the turns represent in your life? Do you resist some turns and like others. Notice subtle changes in the terrain – the ups and downs. Notice any synchronicities such as an overheard word or a bird's song. Consider all of your experiences in the labyrinth in relation to your life's journey. Walk alone and then journal your experience. Walk with a group and then share your experiences. What does the labyrinth teach you about your life?

"Palms Up, Palms Down"

"Palms down" symbolizes release or letting go while "palms up" indicates receiving. Enter the labyrinth and walk to the center with palms down and center your thoughts on releasing conflictual issues and concerns in your life. When you reach the center turn your palms up to be receptive to insight. As you walk out of the labyrinth keep your palms up to receive strength and guidance to make your insight manifest. As you leave the labyrinth turn to face the center and bring you palms together for a prayerful end to your walk.

Celebration of Life (Group activity)

Place flowers and an empty glass bowl in the center. Outside of the labyrinth have slips of paper and pens available for participants to write out their celebration, wishes, accomplishments, and joys. As they walk the labyrinth participants are asked to meditate upon what they had written and to leave the paper in the glass bowl at the center. At the end of the day all the slips of paper in the bowl are gathered and ritually burned to release them to the universe.

CHAKRAS Walk

The labyrinth can help us to bring our emotional and physical bodies into balance. It is used most widely around the world and has seven "paths" as the human body has seven major "chakras." Chakras are centers of power and energy in the human body which channel energy from the cosmos to connect the human energy field with the greater energy of the Universe.

7 Crown (violet, white)

Upper brain, right eye

6 Third Eye (indigo)

Lower brain, left eye, ears, nose, nervous system

5 Throat (blue)

Bronchial and vocal apparatus, lungs

4 Heart (green)

Heart, blood, circulatory system

3 Solar Plexus (yellow)

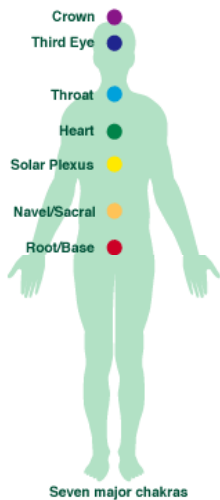
Stomach, liver, gall bladder, nervous system

2 Navel/Sacral (orange)

Reproductive system

1 Root/Base (red)

Spinal column, kidneys



By focusing on the chakra colors as you walk the labyrinth, it will assist in bringing your physical body into balance.

Threefold Path

One Christian approach to the labyrinth is based on the "threefold path" of Purgation, Illumination, and Union. These represent three stages in a labyrinth walk.

1. Releasing (Purgation). From the entrance to the goal is the path of shedding or "letting go." There is a release and an emptying of worries and concerns.

2. Receiving (Illumination). At the center there is illumination, insight, clarity, and focus. It is here that you are in a receptive, prayerful, meditative state.

3. Integrating (Union). Empowerment and taking ownership. The path out is that of becoming grounded and integrating the insight. It is being energized and making what was received manifest in the world.