

Guidelines for the WALK

Many find it helpful to sit for a few moments, clear the mind and become aware of the breath. Allow a little transition time from the outside world to the inner world. It may be helpful to journal or take a mental “snapshot” of your life noting concerns, questions, etc. Is there a specific question or focus for this walk?

When you walk, allow yourself to find your own pace. You may “pass” others or let them step around you. Feel free to step off the path and onto the “labyrs” for meditative or prayerful moments. Since the path is two ways, you may meet those going in and coming out. Do whatever feels natural. Be mindful of your own path. Please remove your shoes, and wear socks or nylons. This both honors the sacred ground of the labyrinth and protects and preserves the path. If shoes are necessary for medical reasons, please feel free to wear them.

If you are following another walker, allow the person ahead of you to make at least the first turn and return about halfway down that turn before entering the labyrinth.

Walking 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



Welcome to the Labyrinth.

Be assured there is no wrong ways to walk the path. If you follow the path, you cannot get lost—there is only one way in, and one way out—there are no tricks to it and no dead ends. As you walk the winding path, allow it to become a metaphor, a mirror for where you are in your life. Walk with an open mind and an open heart, allowing the labyrinth to reveal sorrows, insights, joy, peace, and healing.

The following suggestions are here for those who wish a further guide. You can select an approach from each movement or create your own rhythm to each of the three stages of the walk.

MOVING INWARD or PURGATION

*A time to Cast off, Discard, Divest Unwrap, Forget,
Release, Let go, Empty*

- A time to shed thoughts and emotions and quiet the mind. Some may wish to use sacred words or special image to enter the silence.
- Although one may enter the walk with particular questions or intentions, the journey towards the center may be a time to set aside all the things we think we want and need, and open ourselves to find what God wants.
- Seek to become a child before God, empty, open, expectant.
- Reject any anxious desires or expectations about what "should" happen in the labyrinth. Simply walk in prayer, reflection, silence, allowing the walking itself to quiet and deepen your attentiveness.

CENTERING or ILLUMINATION

*A place of meditation and prayer, a time to hear and
receive what is there for you.*

- Take time to listen to an inner voice or to silence or to mystery.
- Stay in the center as long as you'd like, until you are satisfied. Consider the possibility of new images, insights, understandings, the miraculous, the transformative Spirit entering your life in a new way.

- Contemplate the blessing of the hidden nature of God who cannot be fully known, cannot be manipulated, cannot be made into an idol, pinned down, contained or tamed, yet is very simply, Love.
- Enjoy the silence, stillness, waiting and the simplicity of seemingly nothing happening.

MOVING OUTWARD or UNION

*Sensing oneness with God and becoming empowered into action,
given new direction, satisfaction, comfort and new energy.*

- The return Journey empowers us to find and do the work you feel your soul reaching for. Oftentimes, there is a lighter step, a deep peace or joy, a sense of a simple and more focused life.
- Rest in the knowledge of God's unconditional love.
- Move always from anxiety toward peace and deeper faith and Love.

... Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not seek the answers which cannot be given you, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a young poet