



PRAYER

PRAISE | LISTEN | ASK

TALK WITH GOD

PRAYER LABYRINTH

Pray with your fingers and feet

By Trevecca Okholm

About Prayer Labyrinths

Prayer labyrinths began around the twelfth century as a substitute for making a pilgrimage to a holy site. After Jerusalem was conquered by the Muslim armies in 638 C.E., pilgrimage became increasingly difficult, and by the time of the Crusades in the Middle Ages it was nearly impossible. So, instead, people would walk a labyrinth as a symbol of the pilgrimage. Traditionally, the path of the labyrinth was carved in the stone floor of a church or monastery. One of the most well known is at the Chartres Cathedral in France, built in 1201.

The labyrinth is not a maze. There is one entry point, a single path to follow to the center, and the exit is following that path in reverse. As you walk in you are walking towards God, the center of the labyrinth. Your arrival at the center is a time to be quiet with God. As as you exit from the center, you are going with God back out into the world.

Walking the labyrinth is a slow, quiet process that can focus your mind and help you feel closer to God. It is a way to set aside time to pray and to be with God; to put down our phones, to have conversation with God, to be alone or to be with others in prayer.

There is no one right way to pray with the labyrinth, no one right prayer or speed of walking, no right labyrinth design. You can look up lots of pictures of a prayer labyrinth online.

Praying With a Labyrinth

“Walk” a large prayer labyrinth with your feet or trace a little prayer labyrinth with your finger.

Draw a simple finger labyrinth on paper or create a larger walking labyrinth with stones or tree branches in your back yard or at the park. You can also create a finger labyrinth out of quick dry clay or playdough.

As you walk the labyrinth you might want to pray for yourself, your family, or your friends. You might want to remember and pray for people in places of war around the world. You might also want to pray for someone who is sick or lonely or afraid.

When you get to the center, stand still and close your eyes and be with God for just a moment before you walk (or move your finger) out of the center toward the entrance of the labyrinth.



For more ideas for using a prayer labyrinth with children see:

- Finn-Borgo, Lacy. *Spiritual Conversations with Children: Listening to God Together*. (chapter 7—but really her whole book!)
- Smith, Traci. *Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home* (chapters 5&6)
- Okholm, Trevecca. *The Grandparenting Effect: Bridging Generations One Story at a Time* (pgs. 117-128)