

Labyrinth Walk – General Guide

There are many “right” ways and no “wrong” ways to walk a labyrinth, although etiquette dictates that when walking with others, we do so in a manner that will not be disruptive to others. When entering the labyrinth, leave a generous space after the walker before you. When passing another, step slightly to one side.

If ritual helps you center yourself, by all means use it! If you find ritual intrusive, a simpler style will likely be better for you. Walk at a pace that feels right to you. Remain in the center for as long as you wish before retracing your steps back along the path to exit the labyrinth.

The Four Rs

Four stages have been described by Lauren Artress, sometimes called the Four Fold Path or simply the 4 Rs. They are:

- 1) **Remember** that you are blessed.
- 2) **Releasing** or letting go – quieting the mind as you walk from the entry to the center.
- 3) **Receiving** – having emptied your mind, let the openness now be filled with creative spirit.
- 4) **Resolve** or **Rejuvenation** – as you walk from the center back to the entry, take what you have received and resolve to take the steps necessary to move your life forward. **Reclaim** the responsibilities you released as you walked inward, but now with new strength to carry them.

If ritual appeals to you, here are some suggestions:

Strike the chime at the entry (or bring a small bell to ring), then wait until it fades away before beginning to walk. Remember that you are blessed.

Use a prayer or meditation to center your thoughts as you walk, clearing your mind of distractions. You might repeat it over and over, or you might prefer to repeat it as you make each turn. Or you might bring a question into the labyrinth with you. Some prefer to use a one-word mantra to clear their minds. You may find a variety of ways to clear away thoughts and distractions; experiment to find what works well for you.

Use the chime (or bell) again as you exit the labyrinth to serve as an auditory signal that you are returning to the outside world, better prepared for its challenges.

Most of all, remember that rituals and even the labyrinth itself are tools, not an end in themselves. Be flexible if you choose to use rituals in your walk, taking care that they don't become an end in themselves. If you find yourself more concerned with the ritual, try changing your walk ritual in at least one way each time – or discard your rituals completely for your walk and let the freedom of the set pathway, with no choices in which way to go are needed, open your mind and your heart.

Prayers:

One thing I have asked of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life; to behold the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple. [Celtic Daily Prayer, p.17]

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten
Those who seek God shall never go wanting
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten
God alone fill us. [Taizé]

The peace of the Father of joy,
The peace of the Christ of hope,
The peace of the Spirit of grace. [CDP, p.45]

St. Columba's Episcopal Church
1251 Las Posas Road
Camarillo, CA 93010

(805) 482-8831
www.StColumbaCA.com