

# The Diocese of Lincoln Labyrinth Project



**‘Engaging people with spirituality in and around  
our churches and on the edge of the sacred’**



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Welcome to the diocesan Labyrinth Project, engaging people with spirituality in and around our churches and on the edge of the sacred.

We hope that this information pack will help you to make the best of your time using the labyrinth.

The pack includes:

- an introduction to the labyrinth
- where you can walk the labyrinth in greater Lincolnshire
- information and advice about holding a labyrinth event
- guidance for walking the labyrinth and suggestions for follow-up
- practical tips for unfolding and folding the labyrinths
- Details of helpful resources.

**For further information or advice, and to book a labyrinth,  
please send an email to: [labyrinth@lincoln.anglican.org](mailto:labyrinth@lincoln.anglican.org)**



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# **An introduction to the labyrinth in greater Lincolnshire**

## **What is the labyrinth?**

The labyrinth is an interactive opportunity for developing our spiritual journey. It is for anyone who wants a break from surfing the surface of culture to contemplate the deeper things of life. It reshapes an ancient ritual for the 21st century. Its path takes the journey-maker on a symbolic journey, creating space to unwind and think – in particular, about our relationships with ourselves, one another, our wider world and with God.

## **Some history**

Some of the earliest forms of labyrinths are found in Greece, dating back to 2500–2000 BC. The Cretan Labyrinth or classical seven-circuit labyrinth was so much part of the fabric of this early society that it appeared on coins and pottery. Early Christian labyrinths date back to the fourth century. The Chartres-design labyrinth (available to borrow on canvas) is a replica of the labyrinth laid into the cathedral floor at Chartres in France in the 13th century. This is an eleven-circuit labyrinth, the 12th circuit forming its centre. The Baltic Wheel labyrinth (also available to borrow on canvas) originated in Germany and Scandinavia and is different from the Chartres design in that it has two entrances, one following the twists and turns of the path, the other taking you directly to the centre.

## **Labyrinths, not mazes**

Unlike a maze they have only one path – there are no dead ends. People walk the labyrinth at their own pace, as an aid to contemplative prayer and reflection, as a spiritual exercise, or as a form of pilgrimage. People from many cultures, faiths and traditions have, for millennia, used the labyrinth as a symbol of their search for meaning and guidance. The path twists and turns back on itself many times before reaching the centre, in the same way that life itself has its twists and turns.

## **A reflective space**

The entrance to the labyrinth can be a place to stop, reflect, pray or form an intention for the spiritual walk you are able to undertake. The path has three stages: the 'inward' journey, the centre and the 'outward' journey. The theme of the 'inward' journey can be a letting go of things that hinder our wholeness and inner approach to God. The centre of the labyrinth can be a space of meditative prayer and peace. The theme of the 'outward' journey can be relationship – with ourselves, with others and with the world – seen in the light of our relationship with God.



## Types of labyrinth



**Chartres design**



**Baltic Wheel design**

## Where can you experience the labyrinth?

There are three portable canvas labyrinths available in the diocese. One is of the Chartres design (11 circuit and 36-feet across), one a smaller version (19-feet across) and the other based on the Baltic Wheel (25-feet across). They can be borrowed and used in churches, at festivals, in schools and many other venues. For booking information, please see the second page.



You might wish to visit a permanent labyrinth at:

*The Community  
of St Francis*  
San Damiano  
38 Drury Street  
Metheringham  
Lincolnshire LN4 3EZ  
T: 01526 321 115  
E: [metheringhamcsf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:metheringhamcsf@franciscans.org.uk)





Labyrinths may also be experienced at one-off events, such as the Labyrinth Festival held in August 2014, and which featured a chalk labyrinth on the floor of Lincoln Cathedral. You can also make a labyrinth yourself using masking tape, cloth, shoes, sand... there are many possibilities. There is an ancient labyrinth, known as Julian's Bower, at Alkborough, north of Scunthorpe, where its labyrinth design is repeated at the entrance to the village church (*below*; Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire DN15 9JN). There is also a grass labyrinth at St Paul's Church at Morton, Gainsborough.



## **Holding a labyrinth event**

### **Getting ready**

You may need to begin preparing this a long time in advance. This may include discussing the project with your parish priest, PCC and regular congregation, or the equivalent such people in a school or secular setting, so that no one in a management position is surprised that it is happening/has happened. You could use the labyrinth at different times and seasons in the Christian year, or to reflect an aspect of the sacramental life of the Church. Have a look at the resources list in this pack for other ideas.

### **Publicity**

In the publicity about the event, if it is to be an introductory talk followed by a facilitated walk, state this clearly, along with a start time, so that all participants are there at the beginning. If it is to be an open event, where people are free to come and go as they please, this also needs to be stated. You will need to set a time at which the last walker may enter the labyrinth, allowing for time for the walk and the packing-up time to be within the time boundaries for the day. The best way to work out how long to allow for that last walker is to walk the labyrinth yourself and then add a bit of time for a pause in the centre.

### **Where to place the labyrinth**

Don't forget the size of our canvas labyrinths: the larger Chartres design has 11 circuits and is 36-feet across, and the smaller Baltic Wheel labyrinth is 25-feet across. The smaller classic labyrinth is 19-feet across.

Whether you are thinking of using the labyrinth either indoors or outdoors, consider the environment around the area where the labyrinth is to be placed. The labyrinth needs to be easily approached, there needs to be space for people to leave bags and personal effects safely and securely, and there needs to be a separate space so as to allow people to reflect. Ensure that there are no trip hazards.

### **On the day**

Decide what handouts, if any, you will have available about walking the labyrinth. There are some available with this pack.

During the labyrinth event, it is best to have at least two people acting as stewards. This allows one person to hold the space (see later) and the other person to direct people to where they can leave their possessions, and give any necessary instruction about walking the labyrinth. This steward also needs to manage the entrance so as to reduce the likelihood of too much congestion on the labyrinth, especially as people come towards the exit as others want to begin their walk.

Overshoes are available for people who are unable or unwilling to remove their shoes.



The person holding the space of the labyrinth provides a calm, non-anxious presence and can deflect or deal with any potential disturbances. If there is only one person walking the labyrinth at any time, it can be helpful for them not to feel too self-conscious if, say, the steward walks slowly around the perimeter of the labyrinth, or begins to walk the labyrinth themselves. However, the steward needs to be prepared to leave the labyrinth very soon after the last walker. The stewards are there for the sake of others walking the labyrinth, not for their own labyrinth walk.

### **Some other things to think about**

Why not have a designated place/space for reflection available, and if possible with paper and pens and felt-tips/crayons?

When people have walked the labyrinth, they might appreciate having someone available to talk to and to share their experience with; it is helpful to have additional information available at that stage and contact information in case people wish to follow anything up at a later stage.

If the format of the day allows it, a group reflection time/‘forum’ can be a chance for people to share their experience and begin to process it. Therefore there needs to be some kind of closing ritual – e.g. saying a simple prayer together, or walking round the outside of the labyrinth while singing – anything that brings the event to a satisfactory close.





# **Walking the labyrinth**

*This page can be printed as a separate handout.*

## **RELAX**

- There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth.
- Take a few deep breaths as you stand at the entrance. You may wish to offer a short prayer.
- The path ahead is clear, you will not get lost.
- Leave a space between you and the person in front before entering the labyrinth.

## **RESPECT**

- Respect the journey and space of other people.
- Feel free to move around others to pass them.
- Let other people move around you to pass.
- The path is two-way and you will meet people going in the opposite direction.
- Turn off your mobile phone.

## **RHYTHM**

- Find a rhythm for walking that is right for you. It might be faster or slower than others.
- Try to maintain a gentle rhythm to your breathing. This may help you to still your mind and be open to new experiences.

## **REST AND RECEIVE**

- When you reach the centre, pause for a rest. Stand or sit or kneel or lie down. You may wish to pray. Be still and receive what is there for you.
- Take as long as you like at the centre.
- Follow the same path out, or, if you are on the Baltic Wheel, you may choose to take the alternative short path out.

## **RETURN AND REFLECT**

- If you return on the same path, or as you leave, reflect on any experiences, thoughts, prayers or insights.
- What feelings remain with you?
- Is there anything that you would like to explore further?

## What to do after you have walked a labyrinth

The turning circuits of a labyrinth remind us that life is never static. It involves change, transformation and repentance (i.e. metanoia or turning around).

Before you move away from the labyrinth space, reflect on what it felt like walking the labyrinth, and what it was like being still in the centre.

Are there any insights into your life that come to you as you reflect on this?

You might like to reflect on images, ideas or metaphors that occurred to you whilst walking the labyrinth.

Some people say that walking the labyrinth is a mirror of how their life is now. Is this so for you? If so, what have you learned about your life through walking the labyrinth?

As you reflect on your walk, does anything about it surprise you? If so, is there anything to follow up, or it is just something to 'notice'?

If you can, take time to write or draw any thoughts you have as a result of walking the labyrinth.

If you experienced powerful feelings or emotions while walking the labyrinth, give yourself some time alone before re-engaging with the rest of the world. You may like to find someone you trust to share your experience with.

You might like to consider using the labyrinth at another time or venue. Please ask for availability or check out the permanent labyrinths at San Damiano, Morton or Alkborough.





## Some practicalities

The following photographs illustrate how a canvas labyrinth should be folded after use.



The labyrinth ready to be folded.

Take one edge and pull it over, as illustrated. You will begin to make a central column (to the right of the picture).



Take the edge back over the labyrinth, creating a new fold over the central column. Here shoes have been used to mark the folding point.



## Some practicalities (continued)

Take the edge and  
fold it over as shown.



Fold it back over  
the central column.



Fold again to complete  
the central column.



This is how it should now look.





## Some practicalities (continued)

Take the other edge over  
the central column.



Fold it back so that  
you add another fold  
to the central column.



This is how it should now look.  
Keep checking to make sure the  
labyrinth does not crease along  
the folding edges.



Take the edge and fold it over...





## Some practicalities (continued)

... and then back again.



You should now have two central columns, as illustrated. Fold one column over the other.

*Below:* from one end fold the labyrinth to create a compact shape, as illustrated. It is now ready to be moved..



When you book the canvas labyrinths, please ask for details about delivery or collection. The labyrinths are bulky and heavy, so you might need a couple of people to help transport them. Please also ensure that you agree a time for collection or delivery of the labyrinth.

Please use the underlays provided if the labyrinths are to go on grass or on another outdoor hard surface.

Please ensure the labyrinth is returned promptly following your booking, as arranged. We might have a booking shortly after your own.



## Some resources – books

Some of these books are available together with a range of hand-held wooden labyrinths when you book the labyrinth.

*Labyrinths for the Spirit: How to Create Your Own Labyrinths for Meditation and Enlightenment* (Jim Buchanan; Gaia Books)

Very good for instructions on how to draw different types of labyrinths.

*Labyrinth: Illuminating the Inner Path* (Brian Draper; Lion Publishers)

*The Sand Labyrinth: Meditation at Your Fingertips* (Lauren Artress; Journey Editions)

This comes with a small, square, shallow box containing a finger labyrinth that you cover with sand to 'walk'. A nice alternative to an outdoor labyrinth for when the weather is bad.

*Labyrinths from the Outside In: Walking to Spiritual Insight – A Beginner's Guide* (Donna Schaper and Carole Ann Camp; Skylight Paths)

*Walking the Labyrinth: A Spiritual and Practical Guide* (Sally Welch; Canterbury Press)

This one is set very firmly in the Christian tradition, and has some helpful liturgies for using a labyrinth during Advent and Lent at the back of the book.

*A Labyrinth Year: Walking the Seasons of the Church* (Richard Kautz; Morehouse)

*Praying at Every Turn: Meditations for Walking the Labyrinth* (Carole Ann Camp; Crossroad)

*Mazes and Labyrinths in Great Britain* (John Martineau; Wooden Books)

A somewhat incomplete listing of mazes and labyrinths.

*The Labyrinth: Symbol of Fear, Rebirth and Liberation* (Helmut Jaskolski; Shambhala)

Set of Eurocentric quasi-academic essays on the labyrinth

*Pilgrims' Journey Through the Labyrinth: A Guide to Using Labyrinths in Spiritual Care* (Lizzie Hopthrow; produced by Pilgrims Hospices)

This is an account of Lizzie's work using the labyrinth with hospice patients and their families.

*Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice*

(Lauren Artress; Riverhead Books)

A readable book giving a lot of useful information on labyrinths, and the history of Lauren's involvement with them.

*The Sacred Path Companion: A Guide to Walking the Labyrinth to Heal and Transform*

(Lauren Artress; The Berkley Publishing Group)

A lot of very useful information about labyrinth work and exercises that are rooted in Lauren's background in psychology.

*Labyrinth: Pathway to Meditation and Healing* (Helen Raphael Sands; Gaia Press)

### **Online resources – websites**

Veriditas: [www.veriditas.org](http://www.veriditas.org)

One of the biggest international organisations offering information about the labyrinth. Based in the US, it does tend to have an American emphasis. Organises pilgrimages to Chartres. Pilgrimages include an evening walk of the Chartres labyrinth by candlelight.

Labyrinth Locator: [www.labyrinthlocator.com](http://www.labyrinthlocator.com)

Worldwide information about labyrinths that are available for walking.

Labyrinth Society: [www.labyrinthociety.org](http://www.labyrinthociety.org)

International society, open approach to all spiritualities.

Pinterest page (really good images here): Labyrinths: Minotaurs not welcome ([pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com))

### **Online resources – Apps**

There are some iPad/iPhone apps available that you can use to follow a labyrinth 'walk' when it is not feasible to walk outside. A couple of the best are: Labyrinth HD and iPause

**PLEASE REMOVE YOUR  
SHOES TO WALK  
THE LABYRINTH.**

**IF THIS IS NOT  
POSSIBLE, PLEASE  
COVER YOUR  
SHOES WITH  
THE OVERSHOES  
PROVIDED.  
THANK YOU.**