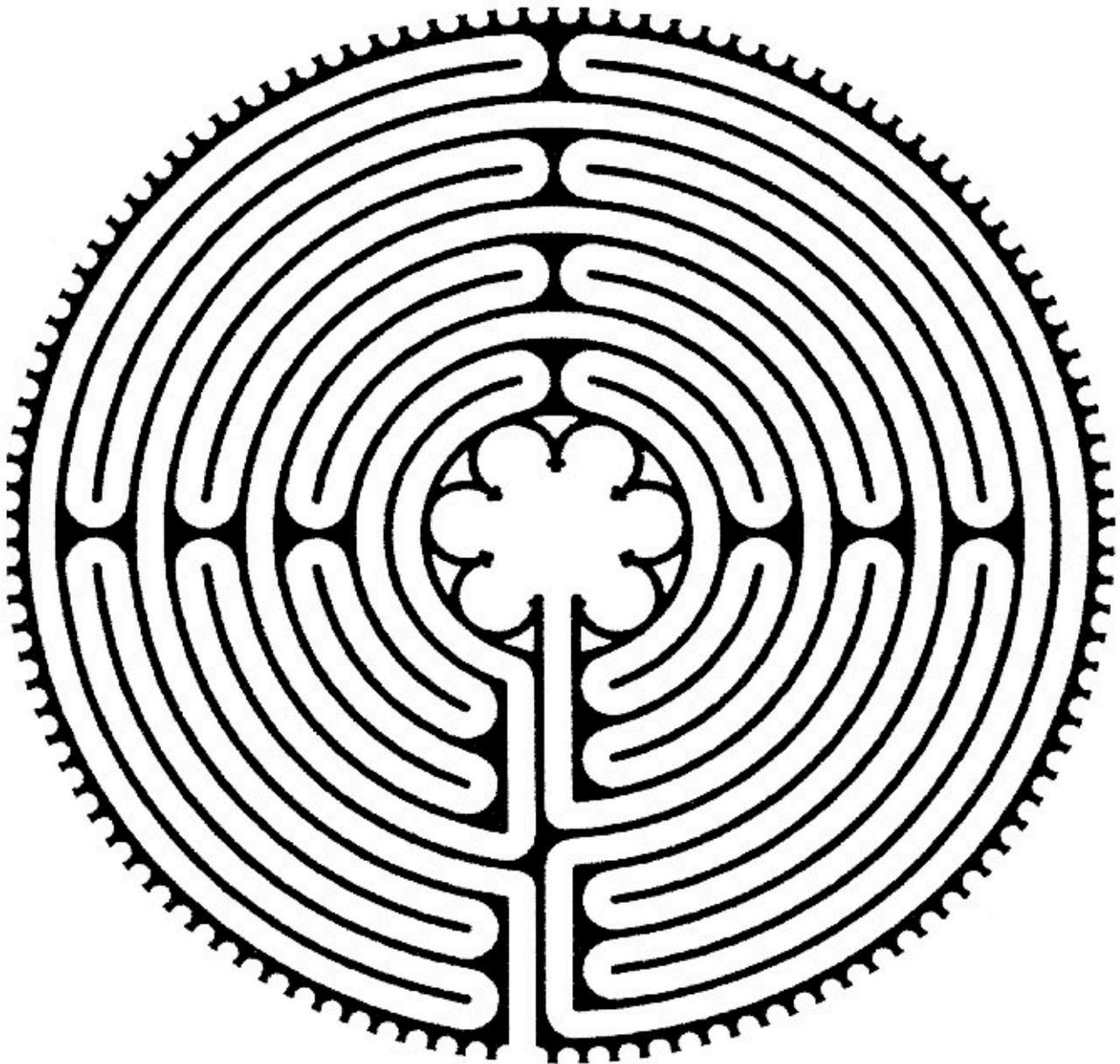
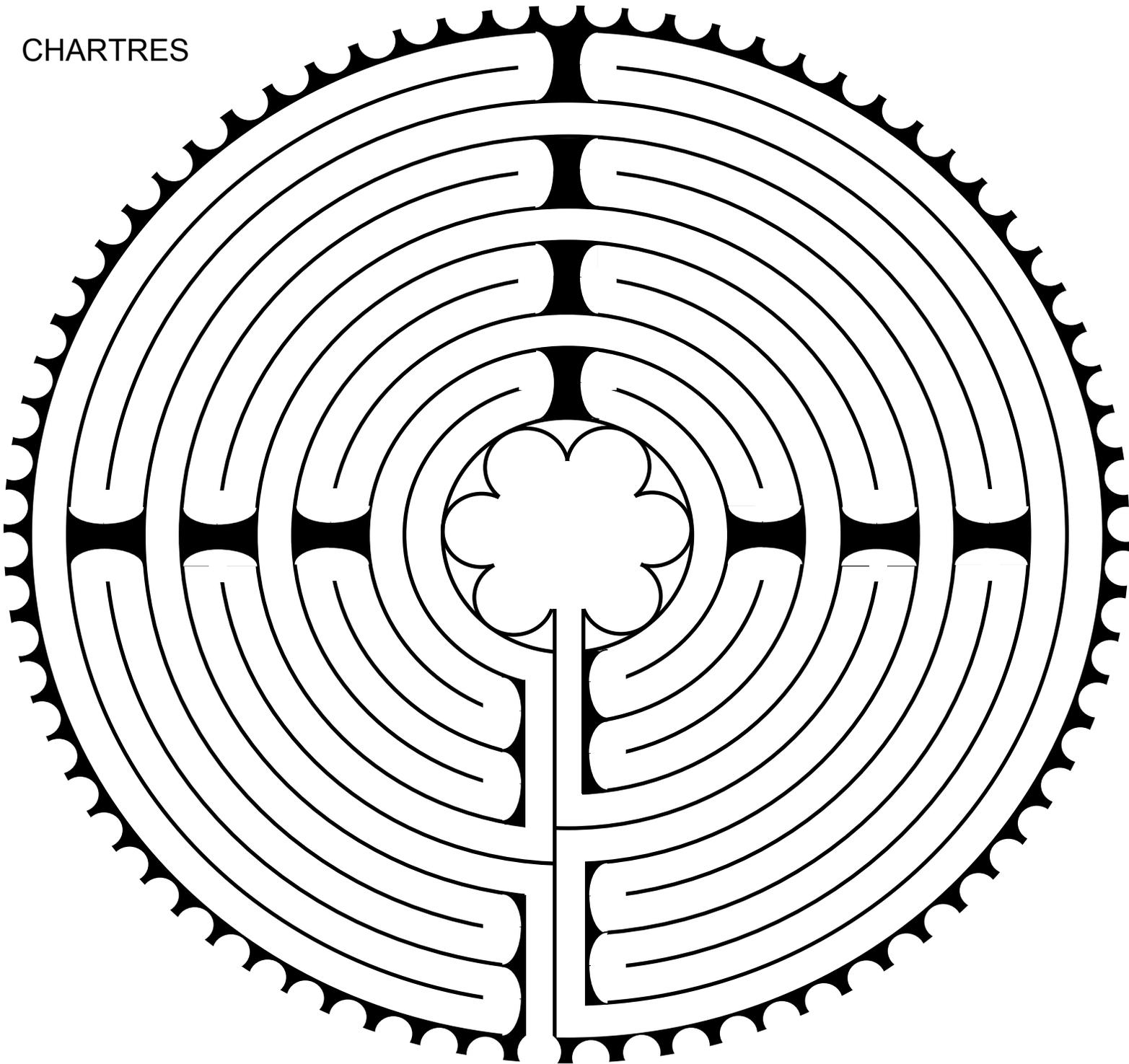


Chartres Finger Labyrinth



A finger labyrinth is a labyrinth design that is cut into wood, or in this case, drawn flat on paper. A finger labyrinth functions in much the same way as a walking labyrinth, except that the user traces the path to the center of the design using a "walking" finger rather than the feet. For many, this combination of movement (tracing the path with the finger) with introspection, is a more relaxing way to meditate or pray. For those of us whose meditation or devotion practice seems to ebb and flow from week to week, the finger labyrinth provides a wonderful opportunity to bring movement to the experience of these activities. The advantages of using a finger labyrinth are that they are portable, and (where paths are inlaid into the material), the "walking" finger can follow the "grooves" with the eyes closed. This enhances the introspective nature of the "journey" to the center.

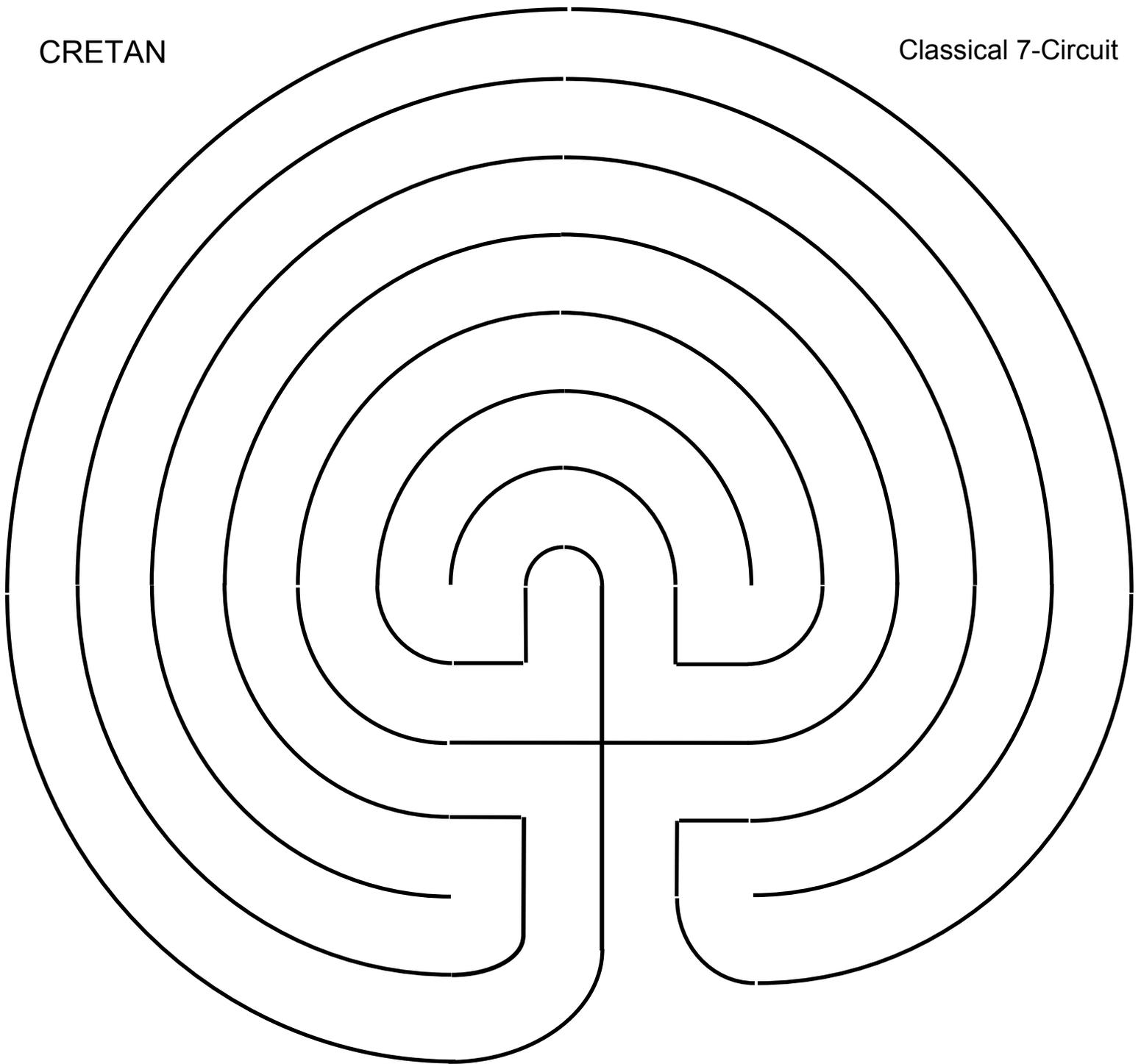
CHARTRES



Color in the labyrinth above using crayons, colored pencils etc. Use as many colors as possible; this will make it easier for your eyes to follow your “walking” finger. Choose a walking finger and breathe smoothly. As you trace the path (from the outside opening at the bottom to the center, move at whatever pace feels right for you. As you do so, you may opt to:

- a. Quiet your mind
- b. Pray for yourself or someone else
- c. Keep a question in mind and feel the question using your emotions

At the center, pause and take several slow deep breathers (keeping your finger inside the center or place your hands comfortably on your lap). Here, many believe you are the closest to the center of your spirit and greater insight is available. When ready to leave the center, or feel satisfied (like after eating a good meal) retrace the path back out to the entrance (which now becomes the exit point). Upon leaving the labyrinth, be grateful and thankful for the opportunity to bring divine strength and insight back with you into your daily life.

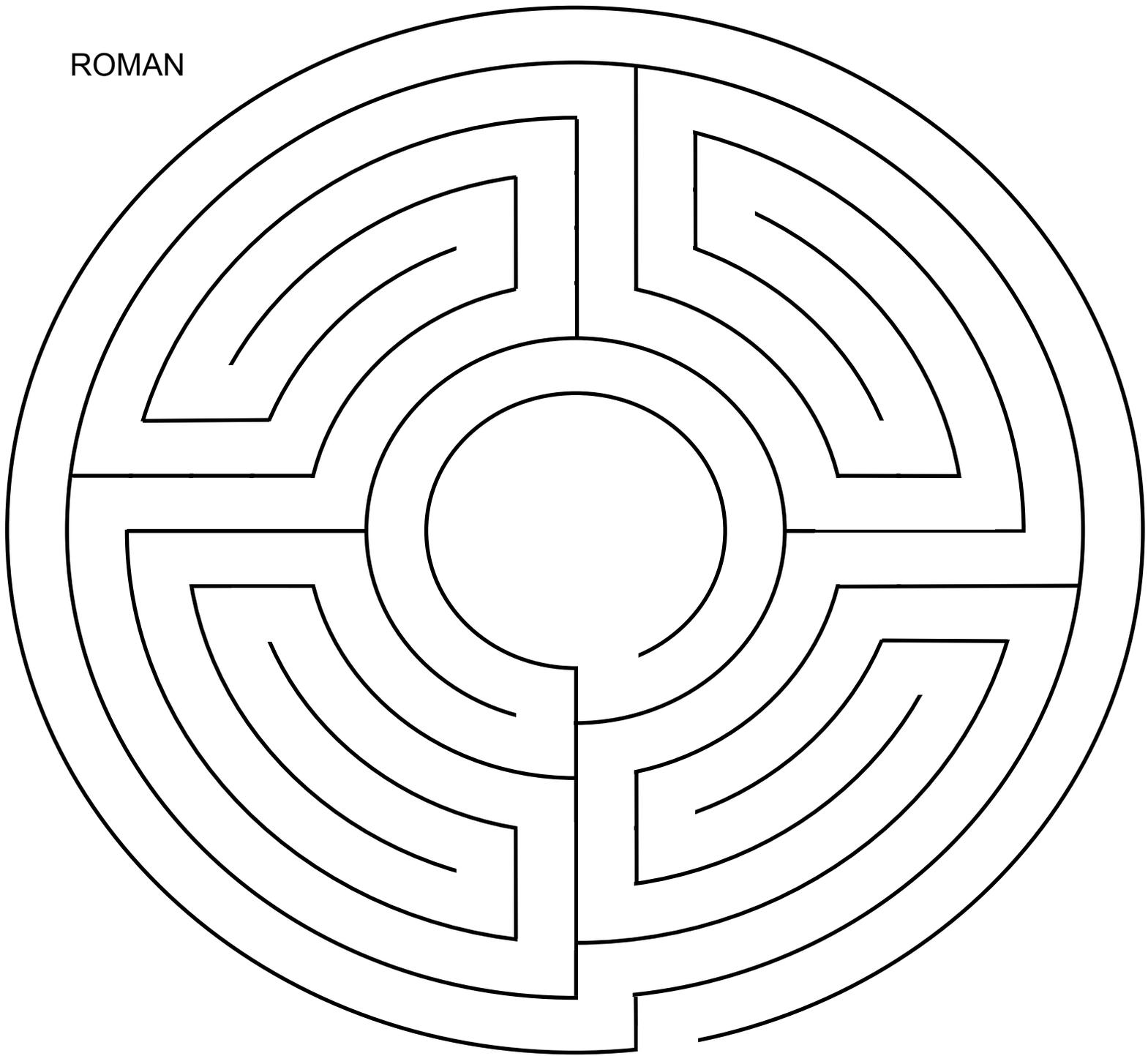


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ROMAN



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Children and use of the labyrinth

1. Using the labyrinth will help you relax when you are...

- a) Studying for or worrying about a test
- b) Doing homework
- c) Fighting with a brother or sister
- d) Fighting with other kids and feeling bad about it
- e) Mad at your parents

2. Using the labyrinth will help you feel better when you are sad or scared because...

- a) You lost or broke a special item/toy
- b) Someone said something that hurt your feelings
- c) A teacher or another kid made you feel bad
- d) You got a bad grade at school
- e) You said something mean to someone and feel bad about it
- f) Kids tease you
- g) Someone you love (grandparent or pet) died and went to heaven
- h) You didn't get invited to a party you wanted to go to
- i) You didn't get chosen for a sports team or game
- j) You were chosen last for a sports team or gym activity

3. Using the labyrinth will help you when feeling ashamed or embarrassed...

- a) Just got a new pair of glasses
- b) Just got braces on your teeth
- c) Had a personal accident
- d) Kid's teasing you in front of other kids
- e) Answering a question wrong when your teacher calls on you in class

4. Using the labyrinth will help you concentrate...

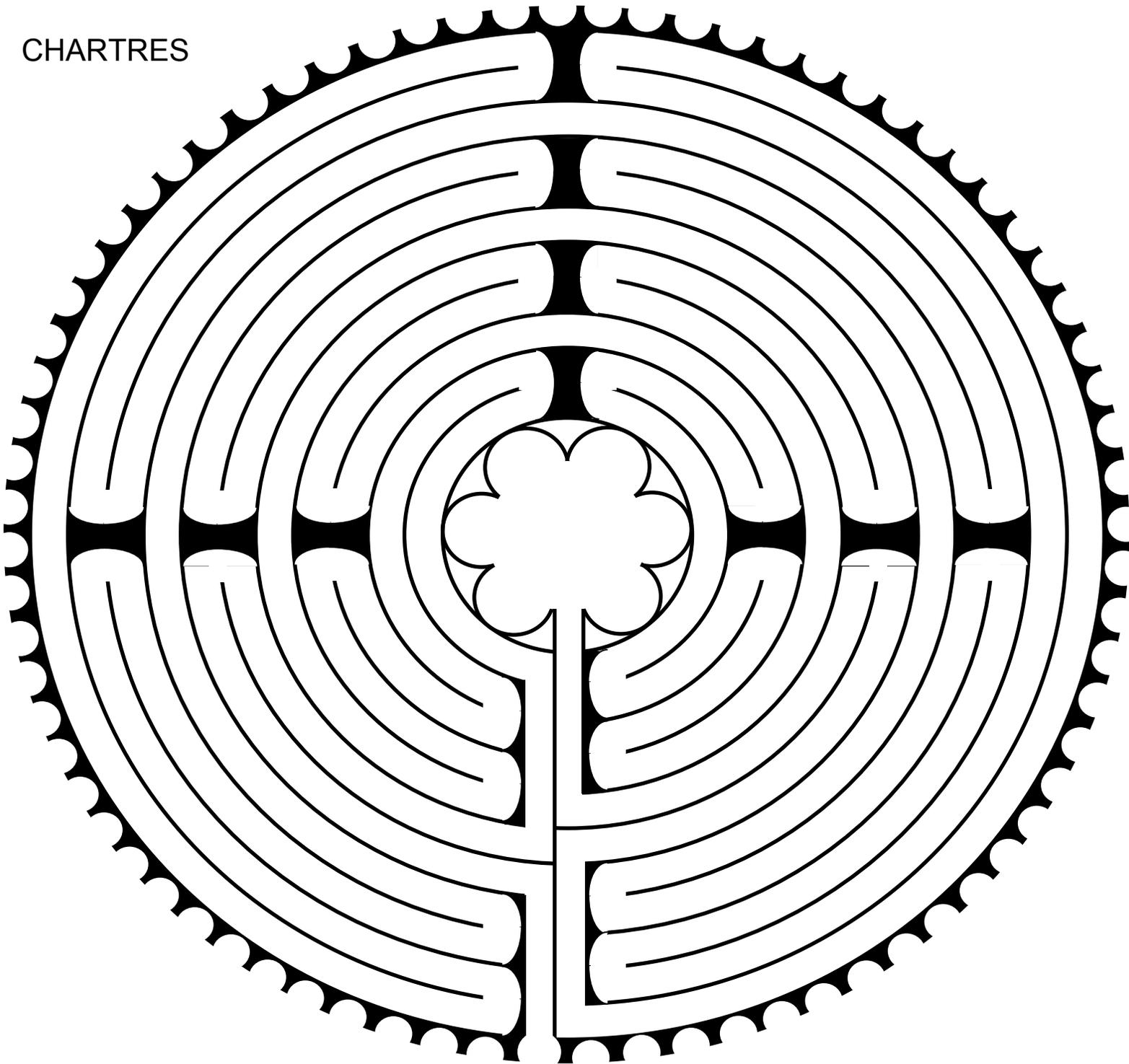
You have to study or finish homework before playing a game or watching TV, but you find it hard to keep your attention on your studies. Take a break and do the finger labyrinth for a few minutes, then go back to studying or doing homework and see how much easier it is to do.

5. Using the labyrinth will help you when praying for yourself or someone you love...

Many times, prayer is simply wishing or hoping for something. This can be something like wishing and hoping that a parent, grandparent or friend who is sick feels better soon, having more friends, getting a cool shirt or pants you want, getting a special toy, getting better grades, and more. For all of the things listed above, whether you call it prayer, hoping, wishing, or something else, the labyrinth is designed to help you relax and focus your attention on a specific item so you feel better and more relaxed about it. This can sometimes clear a path and open doors to new opportunities or at a minimum, change your thinking about a situation.



CHARTRES



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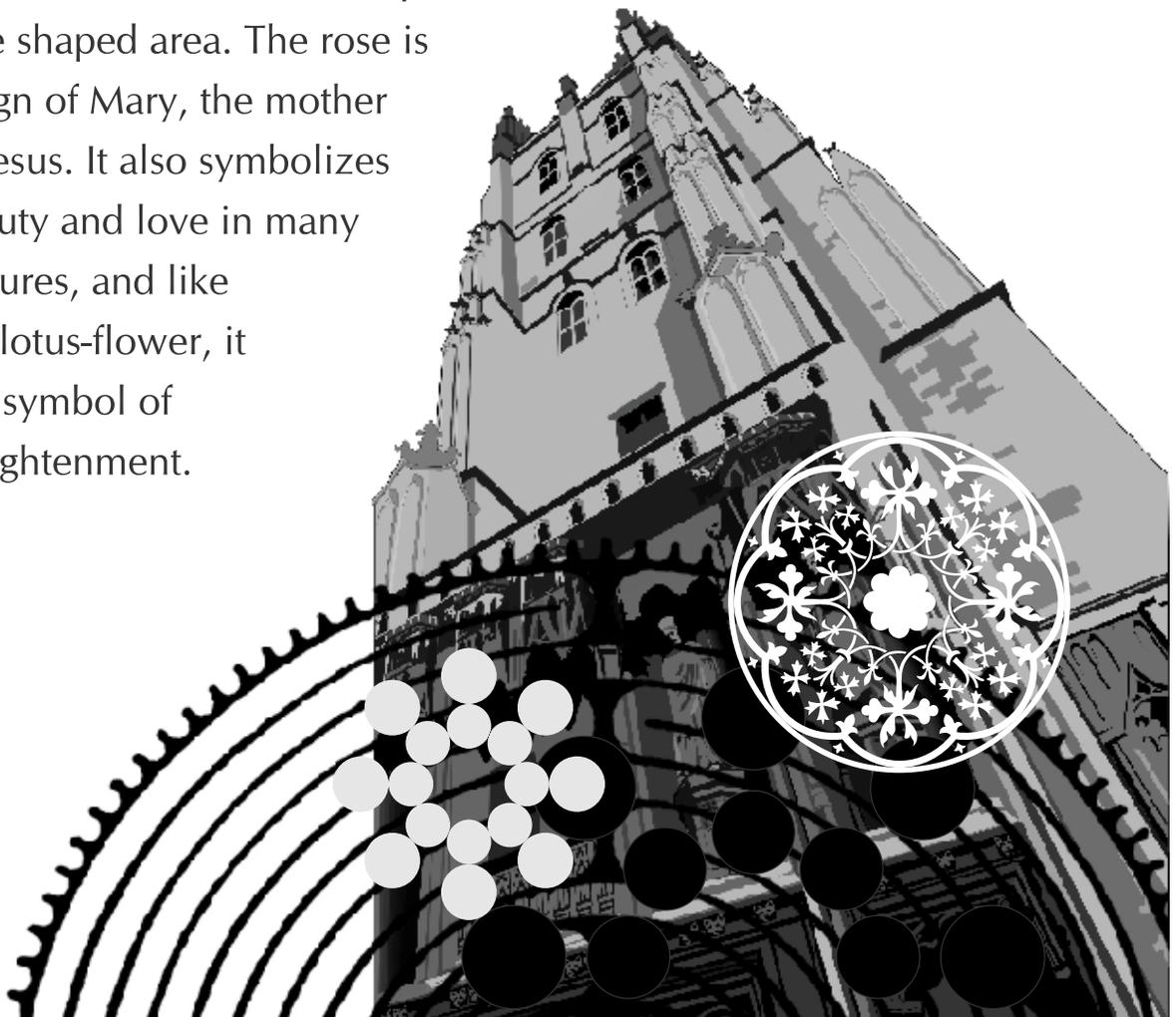
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At the center, pause and take several slow deep breathers (keeping your finger inside the center or place your hands comfortably on your lap). Here, many believe you are the closest to the center of your spirit and greater insight is available. When ready to leave the center, or feel satisfied (like after eating a good meal) retrace the path back out to the entrance (which now becomes the exit point). Upon leaving the labyrinth, be grateful and thankful for the opportunity to bring divine strength and insight back with you into your daily life.

Sacred Design

The Labyrinth is one of the oldest known contemplative spiritual practices. Labyrinths are found in many spiritual traditions and cultures throughout the world. The ancients knew the circle to be the sacred symbol of harmony, wholeness, integrity and grace. Labyrinths hold the experience and power of transformation with them.

Sacred design and geometry - Circles, centers, spirals all embody an ancient discipline called sacred geometry. There are thirty four turns on the path going in to the center, twelve concentric circle and four quadrants. The number twelve is a sacred number and is the multiple of three representing heaven and four representing earth. At the center is a six-petaled rose shaped area. The rose is a sign of Mary, the mother of Jesus. It also symbolizes beauty and love in many cultures, and like the lotus-flower, it is a symbol of enlightenment.





Labyrinths

Sacred Paths for Transformation

By Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress

The Labyrinth can be described as a powerful spiritual tool whose path leads oneself to one's own center. Labyrinths are a form of maze. But, unlike mazes, labyrinths offer one path which always leads to the center. There are no false turns or dead ends. By following the one path to the center, the seeker can use the labyrinth to quiet the mind and find peace and illumination at the center of his or her own being. This is a tool for meditation that serves as a metaphor for one's spiritual journey. The labyrinth reflects back to the seeker whatever he or she needs to discover.

The labyrinth can be described as a walking meditation. Three stages, known as the Three-Fold Mystical Path, comprise the labyrinth experience. The first part of this path, walking towards the center of the labyrinth, is shedding or Purgation. This comes from the root "to purge," meaning to release, to cleanse, to let go. It is about letting go of the details in your life. It quiets your mind. The path leads you on an alternating clockwise/counterclockwise direction which is a balancing motion, very similar to rocking in a rocking chair. By quieting the mind, you prepare your heart and soul to be open as you reach the second stage of your journey.

Once you reach the center of the labyrinth, you now begin the second part of the Three-Fold Path: Illumination. Often, it is a surprise to reach the center because the long winding path seems "illogical" and cannot be figured out by the linear mind. The center presents a new experience, a place of meditation and prayer, a place to receive what is there for you. You are encouraged to spend as much time in the center as feels right to you. Many people at this stage in the path find insight into their life situations or clarity about a certain problem/issue they may have.

The third stage of the Three-Fold Path, Union, begins when you leave the center of the labyrinth and continue to retrace the path that brought you in. In this stage, the meditation takes on a grounded, energized feeling. Union is about the joining with the Divine, your Higher Power, to bring your new insights and discoveries of your individual gifts out into the world. This part of your journey empowers, invites, even pushes you to be more authentic and confident in sharing your gifts with the world.

The Three-Fold Path is based on a universal understanding of meditation: to release and quiet, to open and receive, to take what you gained back out into the world. Each time you walk the labyrinth you become more empowered to find and do the work for which your soul is reaching.

Labyrinth for Personal Journaling

The snapshot method of Journaling with the labyrinth experience.

Welcome to the labyrinth experience. Before you begin walking the labyrinth, take a deep breath and bring all your senses of hearing, seeing, smelling and feeling to this present moment. "Gather-in" to be truly present to who you are on this day, this hour, this minute and in this space. Use your mind's eye to capture the essence of where you are right at this moment. Think about what your senses are taking in and how your soul is responding.

Now, take a "snapshot," a quick thought, of your life as it is in present day. Begin by thinking of your outer circumstances such as your life's work, jobs, children, spouse, etc. in one or two words each. As you reflect on these words, allow yourself to think about what you seek spiritually. What do you need during this time? What "season" is it for you spiritually? After reflection of this, you can write and journal in an effort to clarify your thoughts and needs in preparation for your labyrinth walk.

Walk the labyrinth and keep your mind, heart and spiritual soul open to receive thoughts and insight. When you've completed the labyrinth walk, return to your journal to write or draw and somehow capture your thoughts, feelings, memories and day-dream fragments that have occurred during the walk. Write these free-form to get them out and on paper. This is part of the therapeutic experience. Later you can return to this paper and go over what you experienced.

Use this space below to begin your Journaling...



Praying in a labyrinth has been a prayer practice for many centuries.

The journey into the center of a labyrinth signifies “letting go;” the return journey signifies openness to the new life God has given. The use of the labyrinth as a spiritual tool became popular during the time of the Crusades when conflict in the Holy Land prevented medieval Christians from making their required pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Church leaders designated seven great European cathedrals as pilgrimage sites and installed labyrinth patterns – technically, unicursal paths – on the floor of several of them. By following the path, pilgrims could make a symbolic journey to Jerusalem, with the center of the labyrinth standing in for their destination. Church labyrinths are characteristically flat or inlaid into the floor of the nave of the church. In recent years, a remarkable revival of interest in this ancient prayer pattern had again emerged. *There are many approaches to the labyrinth. 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. A simple form of prayer while walking a labyrinth is as follows:*

□ Walking toward the center means to let go, to relinquish, to be cleansed, to become empty and open; it is a time of waiting and following the path. This releasing (purgation) is an emptying of worries and concerns. As you begin the journey, take a few moments to be quiet in God's presence. Invite the Spirit to be your guide on the path. Try not to hurry or become anxious about where the path will lead. Simply follow.

□ At the center of the path is a place of receiving (illumination); one enters with an open heart and receives what is given. It is here in the center, that you are receptive, prayerful and in a meditative state. When you come to the center, wait in silence. Listen to the sounds of the world around you. Listen to your own desires and hopes. Listen for God's Word to you.

□ Leaving the center of the labyrinth means retracing the path that brought one in; one may experience a surge of energy or creative insight and an invitation to be more authentic or confident and to take risks with God-given gifts. This integrating (union) is an empowerment to take ownership for what you do. The path out is that of becoming grounded and integrating the insight you receive. Many people sense a closer connection with God as they return. When you feel ready to return, follow the path again. Carry with you whatever you received at the center. Keep your heart and mind open to the Spirit's leading. As you leave the labyrinth, thank God for being with you on the journey.

Palms up or Palms down? What do you do with your hands? The three stages of walking the labyrinth can be symbolized with a “palms up or palms down” approach with your hands/body movement. “Palms down” symbolize release or letting go of what is in your mind, while “palms up” indicates receiving and opening up to God's love and insight. 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. If you stay in the center for a moment, you can bring your hands together in prayer. 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 your palms together for a prayerful end to your walk.

The Labyrinth is...

A wondrous pathway that may become a mirror for our own lives and metaphor for our spiritual journey.

A circle and spiral, each a powerful and ancient symbol of wholeness and transformation.

A tool of spiritual growth, healing conversion and transformation of heart, body, mind and spirit.

A spiritual discipline of setting one foot in front of the other and following the path.

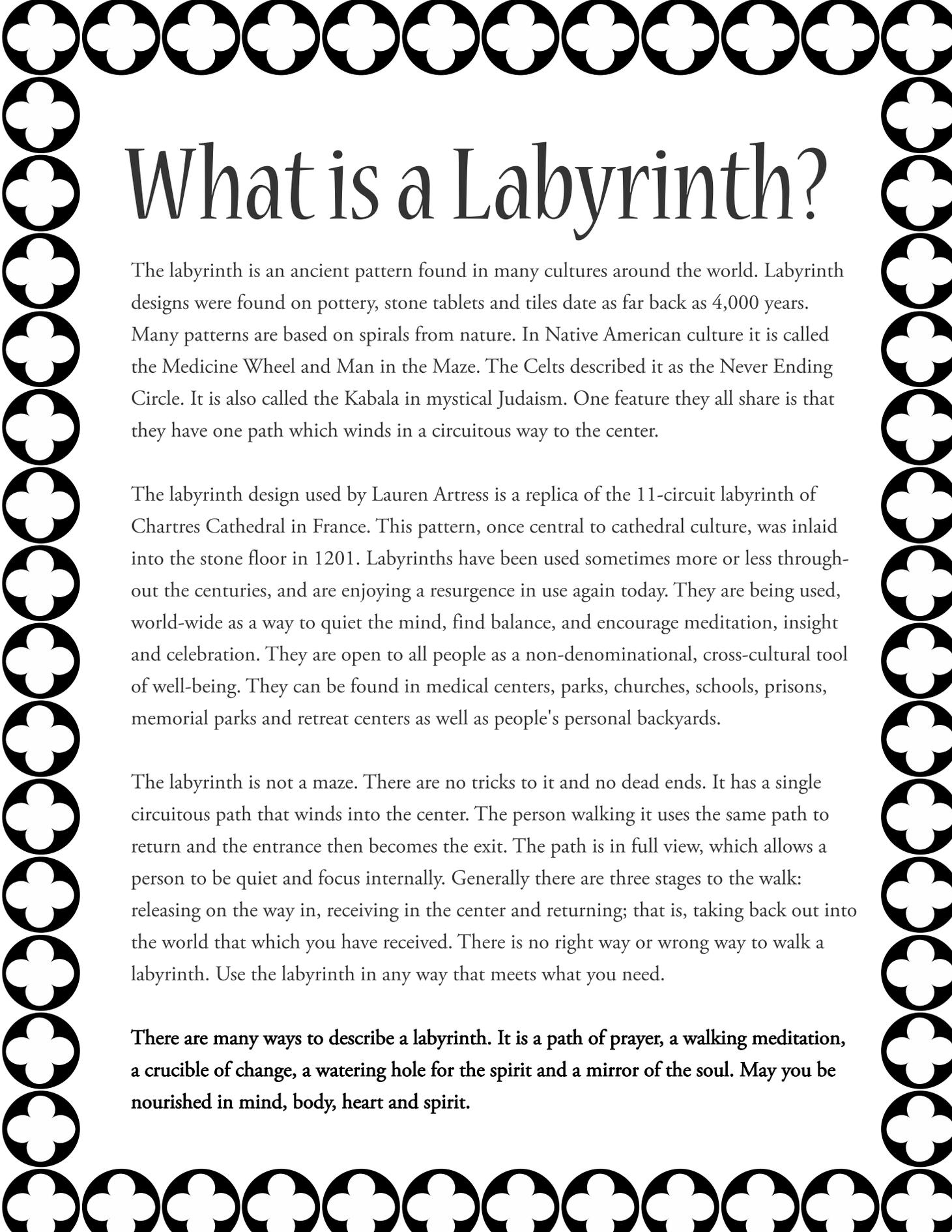
A calling forth of our intuitive symbolic mind and creative meandering spirit.

A grounded yet symbolic space which can awaken us to the eternal and infinite mystery of the divine imprint within all creation.

A deeply healing container where we can touch our joys and sorrows.

...a part of us





What is a Labyrinth?

The labyrinth is an ancient pattern found in many cultures around the world. Labyrinth designs were found on pottery, stone tablets and tiles date as far back as 4,000 years.

Many patterns are based on spirals from nature. In Native American culture it is called the Medicine Wheel and Man in the Maze. The Celts described it as the Never Ending Circle. It is also called the Kabala in mystical Judaism. One feature they all share is that they have one path which winds in a circuitous way to the center.

The labyrinth design used by Lauren Artress is a replica of the 11-circuit labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral in France. This pattern, once central to cathedral culture, was inlaid into the stone floor in 1201. Labyrinths have been used sometimes more or less throughout the centuries, and are enjoying a resurgence in use again today. They are being used, world-wide as a way to quiet the mind, find balance, and encourage meditation, insight and celebration. They are open to all people as a non-denominational, cross-cultural tool of well-being. They can be found in medical centers, parks, churches, schools, prisons, memorial parks and retreat centers as well as people's personal backyards.

The labyrinth is not a maze. There are no tricks to it and no dead ends. It has a single circuitous path that winds into the center. The person walking it uses the same path to return and the entrance then becomes the exit. The path is in full view, which allows a person to be quiet and focus internally. Generally there are three stages to the walk: releasing on the way in, receiving in the center and returning; that is, taking back out into the world that which you have received. There is no right way or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. Use the labyrinth in any way that meets what you need.

There are many ways to describe a labyrinth. It is a path of prayer, a walking meditation, a crucible of change, a watering hole for the spirit and a mirror of the soul. May you be nourished in mind, body, heart and spirit.