

4. Labyrinths and Giving

Labyrinths can also be places where we are able to focus on our approach to life. Christians see the world as a gift from God which shows the depth of God's love, but this leads us to ask the question: "what can I give?"



The Methodist Church has a special service that is held once a year called the Covenant Service. In that service, people re-commit themselves to living lives in which they show their love for God and for other people, as well as for themselves. In daily life, this can be thought of as balancing our own needs with giving something of ourselves and our resources in the service of God and of others.

Value the labyrinth to reflect on how we choose to use the resources that we have been given:

- How can we find out about the needs in our community and respond to them?
- How can we become involved in service to the community?
- Do we share our concerns about our community, or injustice, with one another?
- How do we respond to injustice in our community, our country and in other parts of the world?

5. Labyrinths and Sharing

Since the very beginnings of Christianity, there has been a focus within the Christian faith tradition of sharing good news. The opening words of the Gospel of Mark in the Bible say that it is the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah (promised Saviour), the Son of God. Later, Mark's gospel says that Jesus told people God's good news in Galilee.

In our society, the focus often seems to be on bad news. Things go wrong; disasters happen; people are not as good as they should be. This is reported in the media in great detail. Yet Jesus sent his twelve disciples out telling them, among other things, to tell people that the kingdom of heaven had come near, to heal the sick, to raise the dead and to freely give as they had freely received. Such happenings must surely have been good news to the people who experienced them!

So what good news can you share? If you like straight roads and paths, then it is easy to see a labyrinth as being full of problems. It is also easy to focus on problems as we go through life. Another way of using the labyrinth is to think of a problem facing you and, at each difficult turn that you come to in the labyrinth, to ask yourself "what is the good news?"; "what would make things better?"



7. Labyrinths and Christian Living

Jesus often invited people to follow him. Sometimes following Jesus would seem easy when he provided for people in ways such as giving them food or healing them. Often though, following Jesus was a hard thing to do, as he challenged people about their faith, their lifestyles and their priorities.

Before he died, Jesus said that anyone who wanted to follow him needed to take up their cross daily – showing us that following Jesus can seem as hard for us as it was for him to die on the cross.

Use the labyrinth to think about Christian living - following Jesus - by considering worship, learning, serving and sharing good news. This leaflet, by the Discipleship and Vocations Officer of the Nottingham and Derby Methodist District, is designed to link events in the

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1. Labyrinths and Life's Journey

Christian thinking often sees life as being a journey on which our faith grows and changes as we go through different experiences.

Use the labyrinth to reflect on life's journey by finding four blank sheets of paper and putting one of these headings on each sheet: 1) Daily Life; 2) Worries and Concerns, 3) Family and Friends, 4) God and Faith. Spend a few minutes writing and/or drawing the things that come into your head connected with each of the headings, then fold the pieces of paper up and hold them in order (1 on top, 4 at the bottom).



Enter the labyrinth, heading towards the centre. On your way, pause three times. On each occasion, put down a piece of paper, thinking and praying about what you put on it. At the middle, you will be holding only your piece of paper about God and faith. Think and pray about how God might be able to help you as you relate to daily life, worries and concerns, family and friends. Ask God to support and encourage you as your journey of life continues. When you are ready, make your way out of the labyrinth, picking up your papers as you go.

2. Labyrinths and Worship

Christians understand there to be one God, who is alive and who has been experienced through creating the world (God the Father), entering into the world to bring good news and help (God the Son – Jesus) and being continually at work in the world and in people's lives (God the Holy Spirit).

Christian worship is centred on God and is about showing love for God and devotion to God. Worship is seen by Christians as being not limited to church services, but that is all-embracing because we can show love for God in all that we think, say and do.

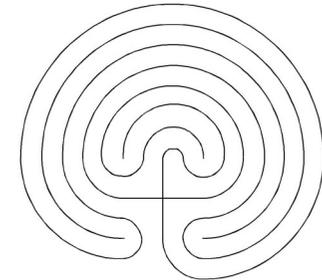


We may be more aware of God and we may feel more connected with God when we go to special places like the labyrinth. As you approach the labyrinth, what might help you to feel the presence of God? What might help you to centre your worship on God? What might help you to express awe and wonder, thankfulness, praise, and love towards God? In the labyrinth, use these ideas to help you to worship God.

3. Labyrinths and Learning

The Christian approach to life sees faith as being informed by the Bible (scripture), the received wisdom of the Church (tradition), the human ability to make sense of the world (reason) and our own unique journey through life (experience). As such, we are on a life-long learning journey during which we gain insights about God, the world, ourselves and other people.

Use the labyrinth to learn in the context of faith by taking a particular issue that you are grappling with. Write down your concern, or draw it in some way to give a focus for spending time in the labyrinth.



What can you learn about this situation from scripture, church tradition, reason and your own experience? At particular points in the labyrinth, pause and add any thoughts to your piece of paper and communicate with God in prayer.

You may learn some things about yourself and about God as you reflect and pray, but this will have only been a starting point. Life goes on as you leave the labyrinth and so can your learning about God and about yourself if you focus on learning during your daily life.