



WALKING A LABYRINTH



During the crusades, labyrinths were used to symbolically represent a **pilgrimage** to the Holy Land. Today, labyrinths are being used for reflection, meditation, prayer, and comfort. They are found in many sizes and shapes, and are created in sand, painted on canvas, fashioned with masking tape or string for a temporary design, or built in a permanent fashion from stones, cut into turf, formed by mounds of earth, made from vegetation, or any other natural material.

The most famous labyrinth is at Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France. This labyrinth was built around 1200 and is a mosaic fashioned in the floor. Other more contemporary examples can be found at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and Christ the King Lutheran Church in Torrence, California.

Many people confuse a labyrinth with a maze. A maze has dead ends and many confusing turns. A labyrinth has only one path leading to the center and one path back out again.

Each person's walk is a personal experience. How one walks and what one receives differs with each walk. Some people use the walk for clearing the mind and centering. Others enter with a question or concern, or as a time of confession and repentance. The time in the center can be used for receiving, reflecting, meditating, or praying, and resting. What each person receives can be integrated on the walk out. Your walk can be a healing and sometimes very profound experience or it can be just a pleasant walk. Each time is different.

We are all on the path... exactly where we need to be. The labyrinth is a model of that path. At its most basic level, the labyrinth is a metaphor for the journey to the center of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are and your relationship to God.

