

Follow the Labyrinth through Lent

The Labyrinth, an ancient symbol of life's journey, differs from a maze, which has dead ends. A labyrinth has only one path to follow. In the medieval period, the labyrinth became popular among Christians as a way to make a pilgrimage when one could not travel to a holy site. Many cathedrals had labyrinths (this one is from the cathedral at Chartres). Pilgrimages were also ways to show repentance for sin, so a Lenten labyrinth is an appropriate way for your household to mark the days toward Easter. **Activities:** Start at Ash Wednesday, and as you travel through the season of Lent, color in the path your household will follow toward Easter. Notice the persons you will meet during your Lenten journey, and consider doing some of the activities found along the way.

Ash Wednesday: In today's readings, you meet "ambassadors for Christ" and hypocrites. Which one will you be this Lent?

Activity: From now until Sunday, make an extra effort to fast from insincerity and dishonesty. How can you be an ambassador for Christ by what you say, mean, and do? Write your answer in the path until you reach the next cross.

5th Sunday:

At a tomb you meet the dead Lazarus, who has been brought back to life by Jesus' prayer to his Father.

Activity: Is there a part of your life that feels dead? Some hurt that feels as though it will never go away? Pray to the Father this week for new life for all lifeless places. Write your prayer along the path.

1st Sunday:

On this day, you meet the "Elect," who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. On this day they write their names in the Book of the Elect.

Activity: Find out the names of your parish's Elect, and write them along the next section of the path. Pray for them by name each day.

Palm Sunday: A huge crowd watches Jesus carry his cross. A man named Simon steps forward to help.

Activity: Who do you know who needs your help? What can you do this week to help them? Write down in the path what you will do this week to help another person carry his or her cross. Begin each day praying for this person.

Easter Sunday: You arrive at the empty tomb of Jesus. Mary of Magdala ran to tell the other disciples what she saw, and Peter and the beloved disciple ran to see the tomb for themselves.

Activity: Who will you run to and tell the good news? Make your way back out of the labyrinth, remembering all the names and prayers you wrote along the path. Tell them Christ is risen!

3rd Sunday: You come to a well and meet a Samaritan woman. The Samaritans were shunned by the Jews. Yet Jesus speaks with her and gives her living water.

Activity: Who is left out by friends or family? What gift can you give them this week? Write your answer in the path.

4th Sunday:

Along the road, you meet a man who had been born blind, but now he sees. He says a man named Jesus healed him.

Activity: It seems impossible to cure blindness, but with faith in Jesus, even this can happen. What in our world today needs healing? Write your prayer for the world here.

2nd Sunday: On a mountaintop you meet Moses and Elijah, great prophets whose special relationship with God led people to new life and hope.

Activity: Who in your life has a special relationship with God? Spend time with them this week. Give your time to someone who feels far from God. Write their name along the path.

