

Beneficial Information to Include on a Labyrinth Sign

By Robert Ferre (with examples included in color from a survey of existing labyrinth signs)

1. Name of the labyrinth

Not all signs include this. For many existing signs I studied you can't tell what or where the labyrinth is. I think it would be good to identify the name or place of the labyrinth. If people take photos of the sign, they can place where it is. At the top of the sign it can say: 'St. Nicholas Labyrinth' or it can be included in the description (see below).

2. A welcoming statement

'Our first message to visitors is that whoever you are, and wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here.'

'Come, enter, and allow the labyrinth to lead the way to the peace you seek.'

'Use the labyrinth as a meditative walk, a spiritual pilgrimage, or a healing journey.'

3. A summary of labyrinth history

This can be long or short. Personally, I don't think a sign ideal for in depth education (which is better done in a brochure). If there is plenty of room, however, a brief history may be in order. 'Labyrinths date back to prehistory and can be found in many cultures around the world.'

4. What the labyrinth is

'It is a spiritual tool that enables us to be still, to discern, to know the divine presence.'

'The labyrinth is a sacred symbol.'

'The labyrinth is an ancient spiritual symbol.'

'The labyrinth represents our spiritual journey.'

'It is a metaphor for one's life and a means of discovering sacred inner space.'

'The labyrinth is a practice of prayer that leads one to contemplation.'

'Labyrinths invite us to a journey of presence and prayer, to discover something about God and ourselves.'

'Labyrinths are sacred spaces.'

5. Why you might want to walk the labyrinth

'One might walk the labyrinth to quiet the mind, find balance, encourage meditation and insight, or for celebration.'

6. A description of the particular design (maybe a diagram or rendering of the symbol)

'The St. Nicolas labyrinth is a copy of the design found in Chartres Cathedral, France, built in the year 1201 CE.'

'Its twists and turns weave in and out, yet lead inevitably to the center.'

'The labyrinth has a single path with no intersections or dead ends. Walk on the same path going in and out.'

7. Preparation for walking the labyrinth

'Prepare your heart as you approach the labyrinth.'

'As you begin your walk, open your heart and mind to the presence of God.'

8. An explanation of how to walk the labyrinth

'Follow the single path at your own pace in silence.'

'Clear your mind and become aware of your breathing pattern. Allow yourself to find the pace your body wants to walk. You may pass people or let others step around you. The path is two ways. Those going in will meet those coming out. Do what feels natural.'

'The journey toward the center is a time to release your cares and concerns. You become open to the present moment, from which guidance can come.'

'The center is a place for prayer and reflection. Receive what the spirit has to offer you. As you walk back out on the same path that brought you to the center, you become empowered to find and do the work for which your soul has been searching. Blessings on the path.'

'The Center: A place to receive what God has for you.'

'As you leave the center, retrace the path that brought you in.'

'Be grateful as you walk back out, empowered to find and do the work the Spirit is asking you.'

9. Further guidelines for walking

'Walk it with an open heart and an open mind.'

'Walking the labyrinth in silence aids awareness of one's self for spiritual growth.'

'The center is a place for prayer and reflection. Receive what Spirit has to offer you.'

'You cannot get lost on the labyrinth. You always move forward.'

10. An explanation of what happens when you walk the labyrinth*

'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 being.'

'Labyrinths invite us to a journey of presence and prayer, to discover something about God and ourselves.'

'Walking the labyrinth slows the pace of the mind and body. It quiets us so that we may hear the still small voice of God.'

'Walking on this winding path helps quiet and empty the mind.'

'Walking the labyrinth differs for each person. It greets each of us where we are on our spiritual path and leads us gently to the next step. While many things can happen when walking the labyrinth, there is no specific result that is supposed to happen.'

*But be careful not to prescribe people's experiences, create an expectation or limitation...

11. A relevant quotation

'What is it to be a spiritual pilgrim but to give one's self over to the journey, to the path, to let go of trying and to simply be led.'

12. A statement about the lasting effects of having walked (see note at bottom of item ten)

'Walking the labyrinth in silence aids awareness of one's self for spiritual growth.'

13. Post walking instructions

'When you have finished, take a few minutes to reflect on your walk.'

14. A statement wishing the walker well

'We hope your walk will be a powerful spiritual tool for you on your pilgrimage in Christ.'

'May God be with you as you journey through life.'

15. Dedication, memorial, workers, builders, date built

'The St. Nicholas Labyrinth was built in June, 2016, by volunteers under the guidance of Jordan Crowley and Labyrinth Enterprises LLC. David Todd served as project manager.'



MAKING YOUR SIGN by Robert Ferré

For more resources see veriditas.org/Labyrinth-Restoration

The determining factor in deciding on the appropriate content for your sign is its intended use. A church labyrinth sign likely would mention connection to God, prayer, pilgrimage, salvation, redemption. For a labyrinth in a public park, the emphasis might be on meditation, well-being, and stress reduction. For a hospital labyrinth, you might mention healing, both physical and emotional. For a school labyrinth, the description might include centering, creativity, being peaceful. For a corporate labyrinth, perhaps emphasize focus, problem solving, or team building.

My personal preference is including references to Spirit, to one's spiritual journey. Yes, the labyrinth does many things, but for me, the most important is as a spiritual tool. I thought about writing my ideal sign, but there are too many variables. Therefore, I will leave that up to the reader, as you know your circumstances and preferences. I end with this very simple sign from the primary labyrinth site of the labyrinth revival, Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

SIGN PLACEMENT

By Lars Howlett / DiscoverLabyrinths.com



While it may seem obvious to place the sign at the entrance to the labyrinth, I recommend allowing space between the sign and the threshold. Richard Feather Anderson promotes the idea of a forecourt (waiting area) and/or outer gateway which might also have a bench and vertical element to orient visitors. Placing the sign ten to twenty feet from the labyrinth will allow people to set their own intention for the walk. Keep the sign simple and have a brochure for people to take with them and offer translations of both if there are non-English speaking communities in the area.

Additional simple signs are important in helping raise awareness about the labyrinth and helping people locate it. Include mention of the labyrinth on the main sign of the church, school, community center, or venue so people arriving know there is a labyrinth on the grounds. Add a small sign with the word labyrinth and an arrow to help people find the labyrinth from the parking lot or main walkways. Create temporary signs for labyrinth walks or events that can be placed on sidewalks, street corners, or near the parking lot. These can be A-Frame signs (right) or vinyl signs (like the type used for elections). The briefer the sign, the more likely people will read it!

The Labyrinth

A pattern found in many different forms in cultures around the world since ancient times, this particular labyrinth pattern was created in 1201 for Chartres Cathedral in France. In Christian tradition, walking the labyrinth represents a holy pilgrimage, a journey within life's larger spiritual quest. Labyrinths are also open to anyone to walk as a non-denominational cross-cultural practice for well-being. One might walk the labyrinth to quiet the mind, find balance, encourage meditation and insight, or for celebration.

