

# Lois B. Small and Gladys B. Hamilton Labyrinth Garden



Where did Labyrinths come from?

Labyrinths have been used to provide a centering or meditative experience for about 4000 years in various forms and from various cultures across the world. Regions as diverse as modern-day Turkey, Ireland, Greece, and India are only some of the places where they have been used.

The Chadwick Arboretum Labyrinth is modeled after the Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth in France, made possible through a generous gift from Dr. Edwin B. and Nancy S. Hamilton in loving memory of their mothers.

## Symbolism

The labyrinth symbolizes the cyclic journey that each of us must take daily and seasonally throughout our lives as we follow a path to unity and wholeness.

While reaching the center of the labyrinth is a goal, every participant in this ancient ritual will approach the center and then be taken back to an outer circuit that is far removed from their destination. Eventually, however, the center is reached. The lesson of the labyrinth is simple: if you persist, you will reach your destination.

## Why it is used

During a walk on the labyrinth the mind quiets, the breath slows, and time stretches out. In one of its most important physiological effects, the many left-to-right and right-to-left turns experienced while walking the labyrinth is said to balance both the logical and artistic activities of the brain.

The labyrinth can be used as a path for prayer and meditation. It can also be used as a tool to unwind and let go of stress. Walking the labyrinth on a special day can also be a way to mark the occasion, reflect and/or consider the future.

## How to Walk the Labyrinth

Pause at the entry way to allow yourself to be fully conscious of the act of stepping into the labyrinth. Do what comes naturally – there is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth.

Follow your own pace. Feel free to pass a person who is walking slower.

When you reach the center, you can pause to reflect before you begin your journey back out.



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