

## Labyrinths

Labyrinths have been around for over 4000 years, dating back to the Bronze Age. They appeared in Roman and Greek mythology and in the Middle Ages they started appearing in churches and temples around the world. They have been used for relaxation, meditation and prayer and can bring spiritual and emotional well-being to those who use them.

Now, labyrinths can be found in hospital gardens, parks, schools and home gardens, as they are known to have healing and relaxing properties.

### What is a Labyrinth?

A labyrinth is NOT a maze. It has a spiral course which takes you from the outside to the centre on a winding path, which helps you relax. It does not have any dead ends to confuse or frustrate you. Full-sized labyrinths are walked round, so that you actually make a journey from start to finish. They can be built out of sand on the beach, paving, rocks or hedges.



Finger labyrinths are smaller versions which can be made on paper and can help children relax and feel better when they are anxious.

Here are instructions for making a finger labyrinth. You can print the PDF of the blank labyrinth and decorate it using cut out pictures or your own drawings. You can also make a labyrinth which is linked to our theme of "Friendship", by using poetry. The instructions for both are below.

## How to Make a Finger Labyrinth.

1. Print the PDF design onto A4 paper.
2. Look at the labyrinth design and work out where to start (on the outside) and where to end (in the middle). Trace the journey with your finger.
3. Think about your life as a labyrinth, sometimes with easy curves and sometimes sharp bends, when something new happened. It might be when a new baby arrived, when you got a new pet, when you moved house, or when somebody who you loved died. We all have big changes in our lives.
4. You can choose how to decorate your labyrinth:
  - a) You could draw pictures to show the journey of your life so far.
  - b) Or cut out pictures and words from magazines to show the things you like doing or things which are important to you.
  - c) Or you could use the poems (printed below) about friends to write on your labyrinth. Read the poems slowly and carefully, then choose the best lines, words or phrases to copy into the labyrinth. This will help you think about your friends.
5. When your labyrinth is finished, use it to slowly trace the path from outside to the centre and think about the important people, places and things in your life. When you get to the centre, breathe deeply and slowly, letting your mind rest. Say a prayer for your friends and family. Then slowly retrace your path out of the labyrinth.

Here are 2 poems about friendship which you could use in your labyrinth, or you might like to write your own poem about friends:

### **Best of Friends**

The best of friends can change a frown  
into a smile when you feel down.

The best of friends will understand  
your little trials and lend a hand.

The best of friends will always share  
your secret dreams because they care.

The best of friends worth more than  
gold, give all the love a heart can hold.

### **A Friend is a Treasure**

A friend is someone we turn to  
when our spirits need a lift.

A friend is someone we treasure  
for our friendship is a gift.

A friend is someone who fills our  
lives with beauty, joy and grace.

And makes the world we live in  
a better and happier place.