8: Labyrinth Walks

A labyrinth is not a maze… a labyrinth is a path to a center point and then back out. There are no dead ends or blind alleys, rather a set path that winds and turns leading you to a desired center point. Labyrinths have been used over the course of time to symbolize a type of journey to a predetermined location. In prehistoric eras labyrinths were used to trap spirits or for religious rituals. In Greek mythology, Daedalus constructed an elaborate labyrinth for King Menos of Crete to hold the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull. Daedalus almost got trapped in his own labyrinth (which was really more like a maze), but Ariadne provided him with thread that he used to wind his way back out again. Today, modern labyrinths are used for meditative walks and for clearing the mind, which has health and spiritual benefits. Explore the wonders of labyrinth walking by creating your own design, walking through the path, and calming your body.

Reading Recommendations:

Children

1. *Lost in the Labyrinth* by L.A. Peacock
2. *Monster in the Maze: The Story of the Minotaur* by Stephanie Spinner
3. *Treasure Hunt* by Allan Ahlberg
4. *Lost in the Library* by Josh Funk
5. *I Went Walking* by Sue Williams
6. *A Step of Faith* by Richard Paul Evans

Juniors

1. *The Burning Maze* by Rick Riordan
2. *A Walk in the Wood: Meditations on Mindfulness* by Joseph Parent
3. *Mindful Games* by Susan Kaiser Greenland
4. *The Maze* by Will Hobbs
5. *Odysseus in the Serpent Maze* by Jane Yolen
6. *The Maze of Bones* by Rick Riordan

Teens

1. *The Maze Runner* by James Dasher
2. *The Scorch Trials* by James Dasher
3. *The Death Cure* by James Dasher
4. *The Tunnels* by Michelle Gagnon
5. *The Rose Labyrinth* by Titania Hardie
6. *Keepers of the Labyrinth* by Erin E. Moulton
7. *Into the Labyrinth* by Margaret Weis
8. *Journeying in Place* by Gunilla Norris
9. *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* by Marcus Aurelius

**Activity:**

**Materials**
- Labyrinth design/pattern (can be easily found online, or created from your imagination)
- Masking tape/painters tape, rope, or spray paint (pick one of these materials which will be used to mark the life-size labyrinth on the floor either inside on a carpet, or outside on the pavement or grass)
- String or yarn (optional; depends on if the participants will unspool the thread as they complete the labyrinth)

**Procedure**
Picking out your own labyrinth design or creating one from your imagination sparks the fun of this activity. Once your design is all set up, simply channel your inner peace and complete the winding pattern!

1. First, identify a labyrinth design and a location. Find a location that will lend itself to the meditative, grounded act of walking a labyrinth, and be sure that it’s large enough for the design you want. If you decide to create your labyrinth inside, be sure the room is big enough.
2. Then calculate size and area of your labyrinth. At this point, make sure you have enough material to mark the outline/path of your labyrinth. It is highly recommended that labyrinths are kept smaller and simple. Labyrinth should not necessarily be extremely intricate or long; this way, it is easier to reach the center point while focusing on calmly breathing and walking. If you choose disregard the meditative aspect of laborite walks, go ahead and create any type of design and labyrinth size!
3. With everything set, its time to physically make your labyrinth. Mark the design and be sure to mark the ending point — the center of your labyrinth.
4. Now you are ready to complete the labyrinth walk! If desired, hold thread or string as you complete the labyrinth just like the story of “Ariadne’s thread” which can be winded and unwinded as you walk.
5. After you walk to the center point and make through the design, further explore labyrinths by challenging yourself to create and walk through a new design!

**Dive Deeper:**
After reading and/or completing the activities, does this topic peak your interest?

**Check out these websites to further explore the topic of labyrinths:**
1. Making a Labyrinth — [https://labyrinthsoociety.org/make-a-labyrinth](https://labyrinthsoociety.org/make-a-labyrinth)
2. Classic 7 Circuit Labyrinth Pattern — [https://www.labyrinthbuilders.co.uk/about_labyrinths/labyrinth_building.html](https://www.labyrinthbuilders.co.uk/about_labyrinths/labyrinth_building.html)
4. World’s Most Meditative Labyrinths —
https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/walk-worlds-meditative-labyrinths-180957823/
7. Background on labyrinths and labyrinth tutorial —
https://labyrinthso ciety.org/resources

Check out these videos and films to visually learn more:
1. Quick Labyrinth Design — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5--pGSEbPY
3. Ancient Labyrinths — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtguyeXFx4Q
4. Finding Meaning, not Minotaurs TED Talk with Eliza Pillsbury—
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etutPYM77so
5. Theseus and the Minotaur — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQuAUBX5xBw
6. The Maze Runner (2014 Film)
7. National Treasure (2004 Film)
8. Indiana Jones (1981-2008 Film Series)

To stimulate the brain and engage in active learning, ask these questions:

Looking to build upon writing skills? Share your responses to these questions in a personal journal or brief paragraph essay.
Looking to build upon verbal communication and discussion based skills? Share your responses around the dinner table at night with family members; each person can contributes to the conversation with their own perspectives.
Looking to visually demonstrate your ideas? Share your responses by drawing and labeling a diagram, creating a storyboard with pictures, construct a 3D model, or acting out a scene.

1. How did you feel when walking through the labyrinth? Was the task meditative; was it easy or difficult to navigate the path?
2. Do you think labyrinths and mazes should be named the same thing? Are labyrinths and maze more similar of different?
3. Can you think of other activities, that are similar to labyrinth walks, that have the same health benefits, a spiritual connection, or meditative result?