



MAKE IT

**THE
GROWING
SCHOOLS GARDEN**

**LEARNING OUTSIDE
THE CLASSROOM**

Places of Worship and Spirituality

Labyrinths

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Labyrinths



Description

The meadow area will incorporate a labyrinth structure within it; the design and method for constructing it will be generated by pupils from one of the participating schools.

Function

The area provides opportunities to tell the origins and stories about the labyrinth e.g. through motifs, models etc. and to demonstrate the learning opportunities associated with designing, creating and using a labyrinth.

Construction

Size

The labyrinth is to be constructed in the meadow. The area measures 7.5m x 7.5m (minus 2.75m x 2.75m for the cob building and 2.5m x 2.5m for the willow nest). The meadow grass will be left to grow naturally on-site for a few months before the show. The estimated length of the grass is 30-45cm.

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Special Details

- The school is requested to generate the design and a method for creating the labyrinth which will be constructed by the garden contractors on site.
- The mower has a 40cm blade therefore width of paths will have to take this into account.
- At the show, the labyrinth will be viewed by visitors to the garden from the main entrance, the cob building windows (which afford views southwards and westwards through the meadow), the main exit and from outside the borders of the garden.
- Some supervised pedestrian access will be allowed into the meadow during the show and it will also be a location for school activities during the show week.
- There are pathways running to the south and west of the meadow from which pedestrians could access the labyrinth.
- The labyrinth can be developed through an activity during show week e.g. ephemeral art, telling the story of labyrinth etc.
- Tiered earth mound slopes of the willow nest facing the meadow will create informal seating.
- The design should make allowances for space for activities to take place with small groups e.g. storytelling, performances etc.
- A toolkit is to be created for the permanent garden which could be used by other schools,

Materials

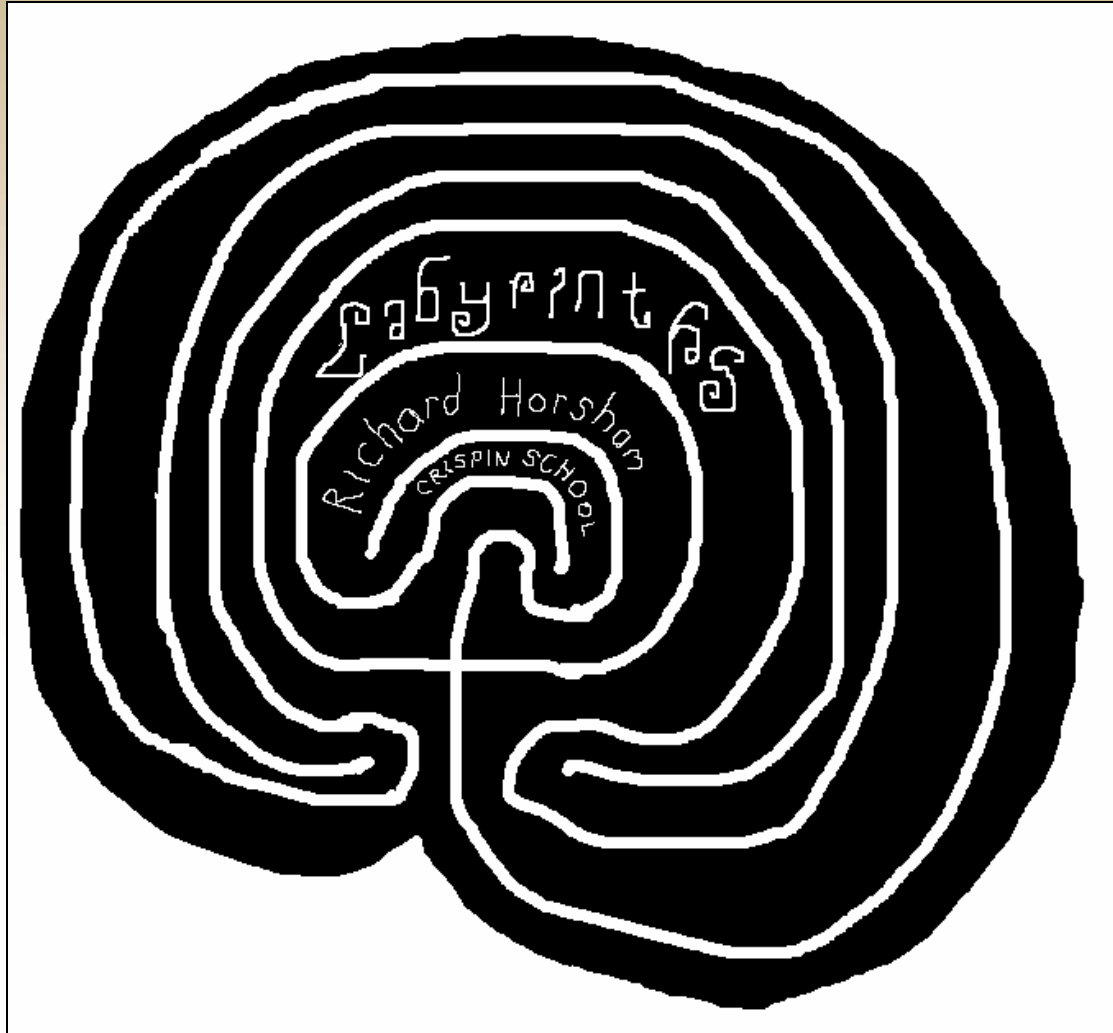
The pathways or walls of the labyrinth can be represented in the meadow grass through cutting, tying, etc. Ephemeral art can be added to the structure during the pupil activity in show week e.g. pebbles, coloured materials etc. The ephemeral art should be easy to remove.

Contributing school

Crispin School, Somerset

We have designed a labyrinth to be cut out of grass in the meadow area. Pupils will be demonstrating how to make and use labyrinths on Press day. We have also assembled a labyrinth tool kit, some of which is shown on the following pages. (Go to the Meadow garden zone for a short film of pupils working with a labyrinth at the show.)

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A Labyrinth Toolkit

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A True Labyrinth Story

Labyrinths have a long history going back thousands of years.

We were very fortunate to have a world expert on labyrinths visit us at Crispin. His name is Sig Lonegren, and his family originate from Scandinavia. The story he told us was about fishermen and their use of labyrinths on the north coast of Finland. Up to about fifty years ago, before the fishermen set sail to venture out into the treacherous North Sea to catch fish, they made use of their own labyrinth. This was set up on the beach near the fishing boats.

This labyrinth was made of beach pebbles and stones set out in a spiral pattern. One fisherman, usually a youngster, would be chosen. He would walk very slowly into the entrance and follow the pathway around and around until he arrived at the centre. When he arrived there he would stand still and speak out loud. What he said was about the need for a safe fishing trip and for a large catch. After this he would run and pelt as fast as his legs would carry him around the winding pathway and out onto the beach. At the exit of the labyrinth he would not stop but race down into the surf and jump up into his boat. The crew would set sail almost before he had jumped aboard.

The traditional explanation for this ritual before setting out on a fishing trip was that it was designed to entice and trap the spiteful beach sprites into the labyrinth's centre. In this way they could not get onto the fishing boats. They would be confused, and being trapped on land could not spoil the fishing or the catch, or cause accidents on board. It must have worked because the fishermen kept up the ritual successfully for hundreds of years.

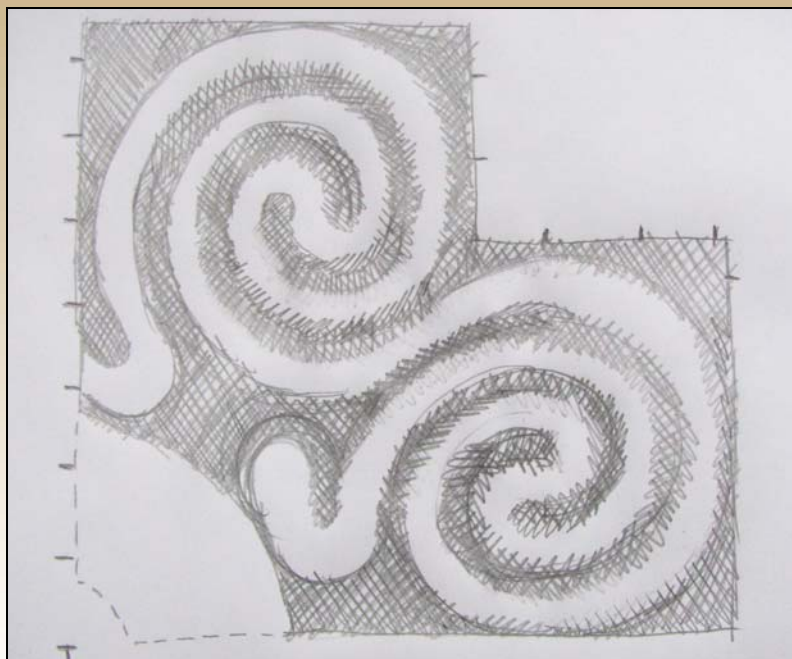
Another way to explain the story is to look at the positive effects labyrinths can have on people. By walking slowly into its centre the fishermen were focussing their attention onto a safe and successful day's fishing. By walking and talking and thinking they engaged fully in a positive start, and worked positively together. This is a powerful approach for group success. They began in a calm way, all with focussed minds set upon working together. A real positive and stress-free way to begin a hazardous day's work.



Five-fold beach pebble labyrinth.

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Interlocking Spiral Labyrinth



This spiral, three-pathway labyrinth, was drawn in a fluid way, one spiral inwards, looping back on itself outwards, and then moving into a second spiral drawn in the same way. The drawn lines are the pathways not the wall. This one was planned and constructed to fit into the L-shaped garden. It is a simple short labyrinth suitable for younger people.

The attention-directing focus for each pathway of this labyrinth maybe changed to suit the group who are using it. The following are suggestions only. To make it work change it and make it yours.

- In the first pathway the Question is asked, What do I think ? Make a mental list and work through it. Keep the list short.
- The second pathway is the Physical, In what ways will it affect me so that things have to change?
- The third pathway is the Personal. What do I feel about it and what would my Mum/Dad say about it? I need to think what someone who understands better than me might say and advise me to do.
- At the end of the third pathway before passing into the centre Stop and close your eyes for a moment or two. This helps you to centre yourself and to re-focus. Open them and move into the centre, stand quietly, breath out and try to think of nothing.
- Now is the time to move outwards and to look for solutions and answers. Walking Pathway three needs to be the time to make decisions about your question. Say to yourself that you are positive about what you have decided, and list these decisions to yourself.
- Walking Pathway Two make no more than four choices of how you are going to do it
- Moving into Pathway One decide who you are going to tell and what you are going to say. As you leave think about the decisions you have made, and be prepared to talk about them.

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Growing a labyrinth in your garden

Always begin with a seed.

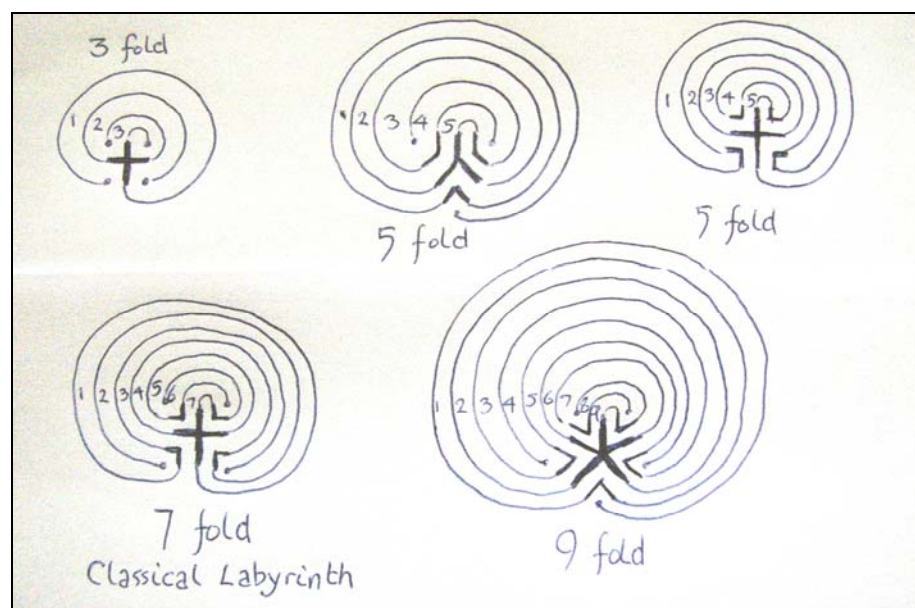
Outwards from this seed grow the walls and pathways.

The shape of the seed determines the spiral of the labyrinth, and the number of interlocking paths.

Use pebbles, sand, sticks, soil, bark, fill sacks-grass over, slabs, anything to mark out the walls; but lots and lots are needed (150+ pebbles).



Labyrinth of soil-filled sacks, turfed over, with a bark-filled path



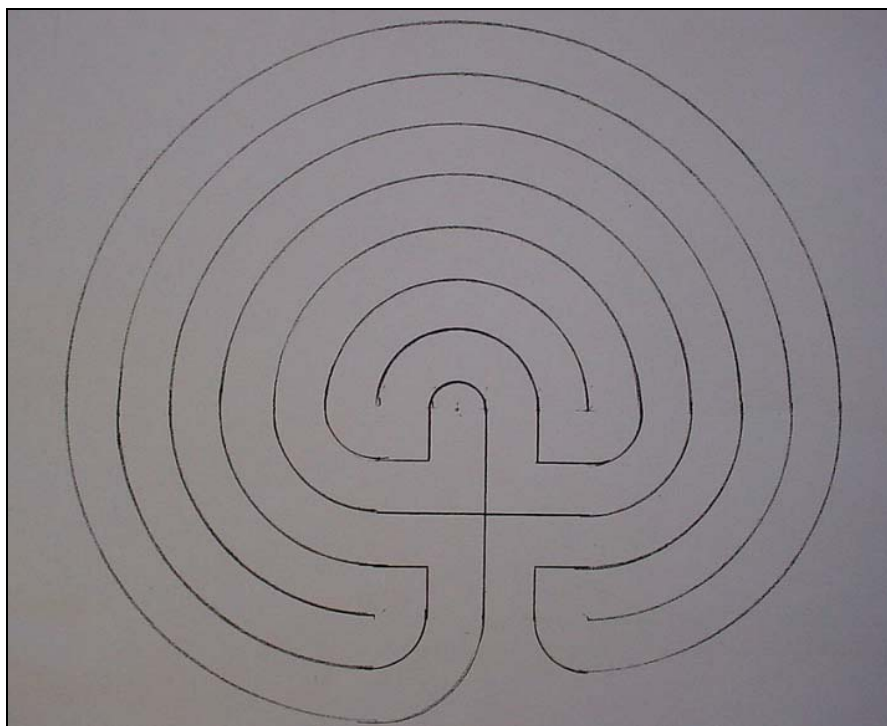
Five seeds, five different-sized labyrinths.

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Pebble seven-fold labyrinth



This labyrinth was constructed using about 330 pebbles.



Seven-fold labyrinth useful to trace with the finger.

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Rock-lined labyrinth in Kenya



Walking a rock-lined labyrinth in Tigoi School, Kenya. Pupils from Crispin School visited their link Kenyan schools and whilst there one project was to make and use labyrinths.

Crispin School's peer-tutors' comments and advice on using labyrinths

- ✚ Learning how to draw a labyrinth is really good. It shows you what the pattern is about. Don't expect it to be easy to learn to draw one, but when you do you don't forget it.
- ✚ A labyrinth is a pattern that, if concentrated on for long enough and walked or traced, can help you to determine what the answer to your problem might be.
- ✚ The eight different ways of directing our attention helped to clarify the different points to our problem; how it began, progressed, has been caused by, and can be resolved if not solved, and even prevented from happening again in the future.
- ✚ A labyrinth has to be walked and tested and proven before any kind of decisions can be made to solve your problem.
- ✚ A labyrinth can only be a problem solver if you want the problem solved.
- ✚ Start at the entrance and know your problem, go with the idea. I was sceptical but I realized as I came out I felt easier, a bit of a prat for walking round in circles, but much better all the same. Well worth the trouble.

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Why are labyrinths a rich learning tool?

1. The pathway of a labyrinth creates no confusion; it is a single journey inwards and a single journey outwards.
2. Making a labyrinth is a shared positive group activity, and a challenging process that is not difficult to succeed in.
3. Drawing a labyrinth creates a sense of relaxation and calmness. This will come once the drawer feels confident about how to use the seed method and draws slowly.
4. Making a labyrinth is fun and provides a great sense of achievement once made.
5. Laying one out in the school grounds, or on a playground, gives a real sense of ownership to pupils.
6. Walking a labyrinth and using it to direct attention on a problem encourages working together towards sharing values.
7. We are aiming for balanced, rational, sensitive and caring young people. Working together on labyrinths helps to make this happen.
8. They provide talking points and encourage people of different ages to work together.

Explaining the usefulness of labyrinths

Drawing, making and using a labyrinth is a useful and fun way of developing thinking strategies. The exercise of using one aims to help you to think both rationally and intuitively.

Thinking is the most important thing that we ever do, and it is something we do everyday. As a skill we pay very little attention to it, and often do not see it as a skill. Thinking has two important sides, the conscious and the intuitive. We are aware of conscious thinking although we cannot always explain how we do it. Fleeting thoughts and ideas that seem to arise out of nowhere we explain as the unexplainable and often do not value them as we should. The intuitive helps us to connect what we know, even if we are not aware of it, with what we do.

Sometimes thinking has to be made deliberate and artificial, this is because it is something that we take too much for granted. We often assume that we do things in the way we think, when in fact we do not do them at all.

We are not skilled at sorting out problems together, especially emotional challenges. We need to learn the skill of how to tackle such difficulties. There are various strategies of structuring and directing our attention so that we are more able to do this. Most of them rely on a typical situation: fixed, inside and sitting down. Using a labyrinth as a tool to help direct attention to sort out problems sets the situation outside where moving and walking are involved. Focussing on different aspects at different stages in the walk is an important part of the process. A labyrinth helps to structure our walk and our talk. Only a few people today actually have the opportunity to walk and talk, most ride in cars. Many young people walk to school and talk whilst on their journey. This is a healthy and natural way of doing things; the labyrinth is a contrived way of following the same process.

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Whilst walking a labyrinth the increased confidence of young people was clear. Once they had made one they had to run it, then they wanted to walk it, and then to use it in a contemplative way to search for solutions to their questions. This was done individually at first but later they found it more rewarding and easier to walk in small groups, sometimes with a peer tutor on the outside giving instructions of what to focus on in each pathway.

Many different groups around the world use labyrinths as tools of well-being. The small, paper-drawn, seven-fold labyrinth can be traced with a finger; alpha rhythms in the brain start its move into a more relaxed state.

As each person walks the labyrinth it is clear that they are on their own journey, even if someone else is alongside, and that they have responsibility for the outcome of that journey. No one can walk the path for us; both responsibility and empowerment come together in this way. By using this method or approach to sorting out questions there is a shift towards cooperation rather than competition within a group; from plans and strategies to values and visions, from being reactive to becoming proactive.

So, how can a labyrinth be walked to help with problem solving or question sorting?

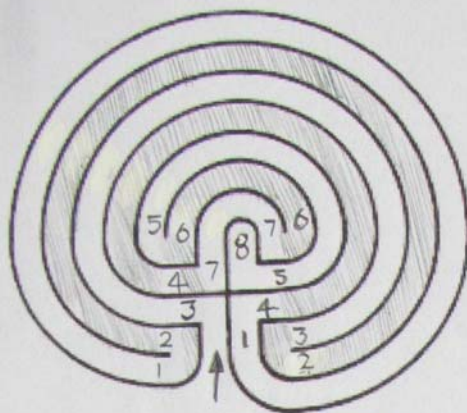
Walking the single pathway of a labyrinth is following a journey from its beginnings to its destination, and then returning, having made the opportunity to experience and learn. The walk in is to allow you to create or think about information relating to the problem/question. The walk out is to focus on making judgements and decisions.

Each interlocking part of the pathway of a labyrinth is numbered, and each number refers to a particular attention given to the problem. The longest pathway usually refers to the physical aspect because that is the single most important effect things have on us – we usually have to do something. Next is the emotional, and then to the shortest. This gives the important opportunity to externalize the problem and share it, metaphorically, with a 'greater' power; such as a deity, or you in the future looking back to now.

One practical method is to walk each spiral, alone or with a partner, and speak aloud your problem. Using a checklist helps to keep focussed. At each turn the question is looked at from a new perspective. This can be a list suitable for the group who is using the labyrinth. Young children would use a small labyrinth with simple and clear signposts, whereas adults could benefit from using the classical seven-fold labyrinth.

Depending on the size of your labyrinth you can change the different ways of focussing on a problem. For a classical seven-fold labyrinth it is usual to divide it up as shown on the following page. Smaller labyrinths are simpler and can be more suitable for younger people.

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WALKING IN & OUT OF THE LABYRINTH TO SORT OUT DIFFICULTIES, PROBLEMS AND LOOKING AT OPPORTUNITIES.

This exercise aims to make you think both Rationally and Intuitively.

Walking In [creating information]

At each change in the pathway ask these questions:-

3. Speak the question/problem /opportunity.
What do I think about it ?
2. This is what I feel about it....
1. How will this affect me on a physical level ?
4. How will it affect me on a personal level ?
7. Ask your deity/
6. What is my first solution ? What comes to me ?
5. What is the first step I need to take ?
8. Go into Neutral – Relax – Don't think.

TIME TO LEAVE..

Walking Out [making judgements]

5. The first Step –Visualize yourself doing this.
6. Look at the solution – make it clear to yourself.
7. Thank
4. How's it going to affect me ?
1. How will it work for me ?
2. How do I feel about it ? Is it a resolution ?
3. What do I think about it ?

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Advice for making a labyrinth

1. Learn to draw a labyrinth. Draw lots. Draw different sizes and different types. By doing this you will begin to feel confident and understand the simplicity of a labyrinth.
2. To make a large labyrinth accept that it will become larger than you expect to be. So allow yourself space to build it.
3. Use the seed method first; it is the most straightforward to succeed with. Use a spacer, such as a broom, to keep the pathways the same width all of the way around.
4. Construct it exactly the same way as you have drawn it onto paper.
5. You can use pebbles, or wool taped to a carpet, or sand shaken out onto grass – each is made following the same stages.