



Three-part Guided Labyrinth Walk During Lent Temptations (Also Appropriate for General Use)

In Old English, Lent (*lente*) means “spring.” Christians use this forty-day period as a time of introspection and preparation for Easter. The focus is on your inward journey to your center and back again. This walk is symbolic of the time Jesus was tempted in the wilderness and struggled with his temptations. In this labyrinth walk you will focus on the temptations in your life.

There is no right way or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. There are many ways to walk a labyrinth. A traditional way is to walk the path in with a question or a prayer, spend some quiet time in the center for insight, intuition, an answer, or just time in quiet and peace, and walk the path out with a prayer of thanksgiving for insight received or to be received, or just in appreciation. Other approaches to the labyrinth are just as valid. For example, walking around the outside of the labyrinth; finding a single spot on the labyrinth to stand, sit or kneel while you pray or meditate; sitting beside the labyrinth while you pray, meditate, or watch others as they walk; or sitting beside the labyrinth and tracing the path of a finger labyrinth. Allow the process of walking the labyrinth to help you quiet your mind and shed external thoughts, distractions and emotions.

Matthew 4:1-11 (CEB)

Temptation of Jesus

4 Then the Spirit led Jesus up into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt him.² After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, he was starving.³ The tempter came to him and said, “Since you are God’s Son, command these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus replied, “It’s written, *People won’t live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God.*”^[a]

⁵ After that the devil brought him into the holy city and stood him at the highest point of the temple. He said to him,⁶ “Since you are God’s Son, throw yourself down; for it is written, *I will command my angels concerning you, and they will take you up in their hands so that you won’t hit your foot on a stone.*”^[b]

⁷ Jesus replied, “Again it’s written, *Don’t test the Lord your God.*”^[c]

⁸ Then the devil brought him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.⁹ He said, “I’ll give you all these if you bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus responded, “Go away, Satan, because it’s written, *You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him.*”^[d] ¹¹ The devil left him, and angels came and took care of him.

Before you begin your labyrinth walk, think about, pray about, or meditate on the scripture included above. Reflect on the temptations in your life and how you handle them. Don't try to make things up, just deal with the temptations that are really there in your life. As you identify your temptations, in your mind's eye, select one of your biggest temptations. In your mind's eye, put this temptation in a backpack or other container you can carry with you. When you are ready to walk the labyrinth, in your imagination put on the backpack or other container containing your temptation.

As you walk slowly and prayerfully to center of the labyrinth, be very aware of the load you are carrying and the weight of your backpack or container. Allow your body to droop or slump. Bow your head, look down, and walk slowly as if you are carrying a heavy load.

When you reach the center of the labyrinth, in your mind's eye or in pantomime, take off your backpack and place it, with your temptation, in the center. If you used some other container to hold your temptation, put it in the center of the labyrinth. In your mind's eye you will leave the container and your temptation in the center of the labyrinth. Think about and pray about what you are doing. Stay at the center as long as you feel is necessary. Allow your mind to be calm and open to any thoughts, images, or fragments of intuition and insight that might come to you. Do not try to program or force anything. If nothing comes, accept that and just experience the quiet and safety of the sacred space in the center of the labyrinth.

Since you left the heavy load of your temptation at the center of the labyrinth, change your posture as you walk the path out of the labyrinth: feel lighter, pull your shoulders back, lift your head up, look ahead or up, walk faster (or even skip), sing to yourself or out loud, and smile.

After your walk, think about or reflect on the total experience of your walk, as well as on individual parts of the experience that might stand out in your mind. Write about or otherwise express (draw, doodle, etc.) your reactions to your experience in your journal or just on a piece of paper. What metaphors or symbols for your life did the walk bring to mind? Did you receive any insight about how you handle temptations? After the experience has had a few days to "settle," you might want to repeat the labyrinth walk, this time selecting another temptation to leave at the center.