

The Summer Day

Mary Oliver

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean-

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead
of up and down-

who is gazing around with her enormous and
complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly
washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats
away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall
down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll

through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

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Beacon Press, Boston, MA

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Resources

1. www.united-church.ca/files/allages/children/spring_labyrinth.pdf
2. www.lessons4living.com/101%20Ways%20Labyrinth.PDF
3. <http://labyrinthsociety.org/activities-for-kids>

YOU CAN FIND OTHER
MEDITATIVE WALKS TO USE
ON THE TRAIL AT:

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North Valley Friends Trail

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WALKING THE LABYRINTH



WITH CHILDREN

“INSTRUCTIONS FOR LIVING A LIFE.

Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.” — Mary Oliver



What is the Labyrinth?

A labyrinth is a bit like a maze; but with a major difference. Mazes have lots of “dead ends” and are a puzzle to be solved. There is only one path in a labyrinth that leads from the beginning to the end. You cannot lose your way although you may lose worries, stresses, or problems along the way. In medieval times, many labyrinths were marked out on the floors of cathedrals. People use labyrinths for prayer and for “thinking time”-walking slowly and peacefully from beginning towards central point and then out again to the end. Sometimes people feel closer to God during and after walking a labyrinth.

When walking the labyrinth, it is most important to walk quietly and slowly, hoping to feel closer to God. This is a time to be silent and to spend a little while thinking about who you are and what is important to you. Life is busy and it is sometimes difficult to find time to slow down. Walk the labyrinth with a open heart and open spirit, hopeful that you will learn something about yourself.

“Unless we find a way to pass on wisdom, and teach the next generations how to access that wisdom, the future will be no different than the present. [Meditation]...offers us a way forward that is available to all, and especially to our hungry and ready children.” ~ Fr. Richard Rohr

FORGIVENESS AND HEALING

Materials: pencils, paper, small container/box

Have you been hurt by someone? Or have you hurt someone’s feelings? Write or draw a picture to describe the hurt. If you want to let go of those feelings, put your paper in a container and let it go. Remember as you walk that you are loved, freed...forgiven.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

Materials: box or tray of sand, small candles, matches

Your life is a journey of discovery. God is always traveling with you, but sometimes you are so busy you do not see God or recognize God. God is love and goodness and is often described as “light”. Light a candle and place it carefully at the edge of the sand in the tray. Remember the light and warmth of God’s love as you walk the labyrinth. What images of light and love come to mind for you as you walk?

IMPRESSIONS

Materials: Box filled with sand; towel or mat.

In front of you is a box of sand. Stand in the sand and leave two footprints. Step out of the sand and look at your footprints. Where you have walked has left an impression. As you walk on the labyrinth, consider your own journey. Think about the impressions you leave behind for others to see and remember you by. What kind of impressions do you want to leave behind?

TRUE NORTH

Materials: Map, magnets, compass

Take some time to look at a map and a compass. The needle of the compass points directly north. Try moving some magnets around the compass. How does this affect the compass and it’s ability to point to “True North”? The magnets pull the compass away from “True North” and with their magnetic pull, force the compass to point towards a “False North”. Imagine that God is your true north, what “False Norths” in your life distract you away from God? As you walk the labyrinth, ask God to show you thing things that are pulling your attention away from God or that get in the way of you coming close to God. How can you grow by taking away the things that get between you and God?