

# Advent labyrinth

## Entering the labyrinth...

This is a special place. On this journey through the labyrinth you will have time to think about your own faith. Go slowly, there is no rush. Take your time. You only need to be aware of other people so that you don't intrude on their prayers or space. If somebody is at a station ahead of you then wait for them to move on.

As we begin our journey exploring the meaning of Advent we need to prepare ourselves. Try to be quiet and still yourself. Breathe slowly and deeply. Rest in the expectancy that your loving Father is near and wants to speak into your heart and bring new life to your very being.

This is a special place.

**Lord Jesus, walk beside me on this journey as I look, wait and long for you. Amen.**

looking waiting longing

# Advent labyrinth

There is a bowl of water in front of you. This is to remind you of your Baptism.

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

**I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

**I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

**I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

**I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

**I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

**I come to Christ.**

Read these promises you once made. This is life in the Kingdom, a life freed from much of the baggage that we carry. What does that mean for you?

Use some water and wet your forehead to remind you.

looking waiting longing

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In Advent we think of John the Baptist. “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is near”, he said. Repent means to turn, to change direction.

Look at the local maps. Find where you live and trace a journey you know well. Perhaps the first time you made that journey it seemed very strange and each turn made you anxious whether you were still going in the correct direction.

Think about your journey of faith. How has the journey been for you, especially recently. Has it been an uphill struggle? Has it been a pleasant stroll in the sun? Perhaps a mix of both...

What turns have you made? Have they been good choices, or have you got lost?

Look at the map and ask God to help you find the right direction for your life.

looking waiting longing

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In Advent we think of Mary and Joseph, accepting a great responsibility and setting out on a journey of their own.

The Bible is open at Luke 1 and verses 46 to 55, the Magnificat, Mary's song upon hearing of her part in the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven. Read it slowly...

Mary seems filled with hope about the coming of the Kingdom of God, and not very concerned with the implications to her of the message of the Angel.

Mary recognised God promise of good things for those who hunger. Do you hunger for God and for his will, on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Squirt a little bit of honey onto your finger and taste something of goodness.

Pray for the Kingdom arriving in the world around you.

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In the Bible read Matthew 25:1-11.

There is a lot in the New Testament about waiting whilst being prepared. We know that Jesus meant himself when he spoke of the Bridegroom. When is he coming?

Waiting is not easy, we become impatient and want it now...or we forget and look for something else.

Wait and be still.

Are you rushing round trying to make things happen, or are you waiting?

Are you ready for the Kingdom, prepared and waiting for the Spirit's prompting, or stuck in a rut?

Be quiet, God may want to speak into your heart. Wait and be prepared to listen.

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So we have to be prepared and wait....

Sit still, as still as you can...

Slow down, relax, you don't know how long the wait will be, so there is no point in checking your watch or drumming your fingers...

The plant in front of you is waiting for spring. It is prepared because it has lost its leaves and it is waiting for the signs and the warmth, ready to burst into new life...

Sit still, as still as you can...

So we have to be prepared and wait...

Be still and know that I am God...

Stay until you are ready to move on.

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The Kingdom we are waiting for is the one that God had in mind right from the beginning of creation.

The icon is known as Rublev's Trinity. It shows the men that appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre to announce that he and Sarah would have a son, but it is also a meditation on the relationship within the Trinity. Do you see the empty place at the table with a bowl of figs, waiting for the unarrived guest; you and me.

God invites you in to be part of the relationship of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

This Kingdom is coming, a place where God's call to Abraham will be reached its completion. A place where the world will be blessed, and God's people will be a blessing to others.

Who might you be a blessing to? Prayer for them and for the Kingdom.

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...but the Kingdom is not here yet.

Jesus said we would hear of wars and rumours of wars before he returns. Just take a look at the newspapers!

The world we know is very like that...

The world we know needs the Kingdom...

Pray for the world as you read about it; our world, the world God loves and Jesus lived in and died for...

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What will the Kingdom be like?

Jesus told the parable of the Talents. The servant who was condemned by his master took his Talent and buried it.

Take a coin - what is the treasure which you carry?

Bury it in the sand, shallow or deep and smooth the sand over so that nobody will know.

What a waste to hide it away like that!

Reflect on your life; the gifts that God has given you, the opportunities that God allows you, the people that God brings you into contact with What is the coin that you are burying? What is the gift from the master that you are squandering and wasting? How are you stopping the Kingdom from bearing fruit?

Spend a moment saying sorry.

looking waiting longing

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What will the Kingdom be like?

Jesus told his disciples to be like lights. Take three tealights and light them.

Over one of them place the upturned plant pot. The light is hidden (it might just show through the holes). Over the second one place the upturned glass. Watch the flame shine, but then fade. Watch the light go out and become a thin trail of smoke. Leave the third one burning.

Which of these lights is most similar to your life in the darkness of the world around?

Are you keeping your light well hidden?

Are you allowing your light to show, but also allowing it to fade without the fresh oxygen of the Spirit?

Are you a beacon of light to the world around you?

Reflect on this. What would you say to God?

looking waiting longing

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You are about to return to the world.

What will you take with you into the world where you are tonight and tomorrow?

What do you need from God to allow you to become a blessing to others, a light to the world, an agent of His Kingdom? Ask for it!

Pause and be still. God goes with you when you allow Him to. Pray for yourself, using this prayer if you wish to.

*Deep peace of the running wave to you,*

*Deep peace of the flowing air to you;*

*Deep peace of the quiet earth to you;*

*Deep peace of the shining stars to you;*

*Deep peace of the gentle night to you;*

*Moon and stars pour their healing light on you;*

*Deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you;*

*Deep peace of Christ.*

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On the laptop is a slideshow with images suggesting prayer topics for the world.

Watch and pray.

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On the table are a selection of images of Jesus from across the world.

Look through them, some may inspire you to seek afresh Jesus.

Some of the pictures might irritate or upset you.

**Lord Jesus, may we see you come into this world as you truly are. Amen**

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