

CREATE YOUR OWN PRAYER LABYRINTH

The Iowa Yearly Meeting Missions Board is introducing the Prayer Labyrinth to encourage your church to experience prayer that offers the opportunity for personal growth and also provides a way to pray deeply that we will be faithful in carrying out the Great Commission Jesus gave to us: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;”* Matthew 28:19-20

What is a Prayer Labyrinth?

A Prayer Labyrinth is a maze-like path designed to facilitate meditation and prayer. A designated path is laid out that will lead to the center of the labyrinth and then another path that leads out of the labyrinth. Along these paths are what we call Prayer Stations where the pray-er pauses and meditates. It is designed for people to have a personal, private time with God to better understand themselves and their walk/relationship with Christ.

The lay-out for the Prayer Labyrinth can be modified to fit into your space. We are proposing nine stations. At each station items are to be placed along with directions for the person to follow. These will help the pray-er to move into a deep thoughtful interaction with God.

Why do a Prayer Labyrinth?

A Prayer Labyrinth offers a guided approach to praying. It helps people focus on specific things that one may not take time to deal with in our busy lives. It can make our prayer life become more real as well as reviving us in our walk with God.

Who should walk through a Prayer Labyrinth?

It is hoped that everyone in the church will choose to experience this different approach to prayer. It is done as an individual. Each person should allow 30-45 minutes so that they get the full benefit of what God might want to say to you as you examine your life and become more fully aware of the plan God has for your life and the life of your church. There should be no talking or standing behind another person while going through the Prayer Labyrinth. Usually a Prayer Labyrinth is set up and left for a period of time so people can slip in at their own convenience to worship and pray.

When should you plan to have a Prayer Labyrinth?

Each church will need to plan a Prayer Labyrinth that will fit into the church program. The Mission Board encourages you to use this for promoting the work of missions but it can be used when the church just wants to encourage people to pray—to pray for themselves to grow in their spiritual lives, to pray for their church and its outreach which includes missions. You might want to set it up in a room for a week or more. People can stop in on their own. This might be something you would like to have as a part of a church retreat where people can be encouraged to pray through the Labyrinth during free times.

Where can Prayer Labyrinths be placed?

It is nice if they can be set up in a large area so the stations have some distance between them so more than one person can be experiencing the prayer time without disturbing another. A fellowship hall is probably ideal where tables can be arranged for the stations. Numbering the tables helps to keep the pathway clear for the direction the person going through the labyrinth is to take.

How do we go about setting up a Prayer Labyrinth?

Be creative in preparing the atmosphere of the room to make it conducive to talk with God personally. Low lighting, reflective worship music, floral arrangements carefully placed, tablecloths, inspirational scripture art can be used to call people into prayer.

The Missions Board is providing the following as a suggested plan for setting up nine prayer stations. At each station, the needed items are listed and station instructions are given. However you can adapt the labyrinth for age appropriateness or for a special focus your church wants to have.

INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER LABYRINTH

At the entrance to your Prayer Labyrinth, have a small table with a Bible, floral arrangement, a candle or something to draw people to read the Introduction to the Prayer Labyrinth. Place small notebooks and pens for each participant to carry with them through the Prayer Labyrinth.

PRAYER LABYRINTH

Welcome to this quiet place where you can open your heart to God and seek His face. A Prayer Labyrinth takes you on a journey with stops along the way at nine stations. Each station is marked with a number to guide you from one station to another. There will be a special prayer focus at each station. You will find instructions for guiding you through that prayer time. You will get the most benefit from this prayer time if you allow yourself to examine your heart and your relationship to God. Trust God to reveal new truths to you. He may reveal His plan for your life or for your next steps. Please pick up a notebook and pen to carry with you through each station. When you are ready to move to the next station, jot down one thing in the notebook that has been important as you have prayed at this station. Expect to experience God afresh as you walk through this Prayer Labyrinth.

“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” Mt. 21:22

PRAYER STATION # 1: Adoring and Praising God

Supplies:

List of the names of God (suggested list attached)

Bible

Station Instructions

1. Read these verses from Matthew 22:37-39 slowly. Consider that Jesus is saying these words to you:
“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”
2. Start your journey through the Prayer Labyrinth by focusing on your relationship with God. Many times we come to God with our problems which He wants to share with us. Before you focus on your problems, take time to praise God for Who He is. Is He your Friend? Is He your Provider? Is He Love? Is He your Shepherd?
3. In your notebook, write down the descriptive characteristics of God that come to your mind. With each word, pause and give praise to God for that characteristic of Who He is.
4. Now look at the list of names of God provided at this station.
 - a. Pick out three of those names that describe an experience when you have known God was there with you.
 - b. Using the Bible, look up the Scripture passages beside those names so you can see the context in which that characteristic of God was revealed.
 - c. Now give praise to God for His revealing Himself to you as you have experienced Him.
 - d. Notice the suggestion for using this list of names of God to focus on one name of God each day for a month. It is something you might want to do when you return home. There is also a suggestion for doing it as a family. Is that something you want to try with your family? Take a copy of the List of names of God with you.
5. What one message or direction have you gained from this exercise? Write about it in your notebook.
6. When your heart is free, continue to the next station.

PRAYER STATION # 2: Confession

Supplies:

Post-It Notes

Waste receptacle: a baggie, a waste-basket or other container

Pens

Station Instructions

1. Meditate on these two verses and really consider what they are saying to you.

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9

All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God doesn't want to leave us in sin so He has a plan by which we can confess our sins and He will forgive us. As our relationship with God grows, we become aware of those places where we fall short of God's grace. Here are some possible sins that others have expressed.

Using swear words that take God's name in vain

Letting demands of the family take priority to making God first in life

Letting sports dominate our time and priorities

2. Examine your life right now in the presence of God.
3. Is God showing you an area of your life that you need to leave behind and move forward in a closer walk with God?
4. If something comes to your mind, write it on the Post-It note. Use as many Post-It notes as you need.
5. Then go to God in prayer. Present each area written on your Post-It note to God and ask Him to forgive you for letting whatever it is control your life.
6. Believe He has forgiven you and will help you leave it behind.
7. When you feel confident that He will give you strength to live as will please Him, wad that Post-It note up and throw it away in the waste container provided. God has removed your sin from you as far as the east is from the west when you sincerely confess your sin.
8. What will you take away with you from this exercise? Write about it in your notebook.

When your heart is free, move on to the next station.

PRAYER STATION # 3: Blessing Enemies, Forgiving Others

Supplies:

Washable Markers

Small River Rocks

Basin for Water

Large jug of water (check from time to time to make sure it is full)

Towel or roll of Paper Towels

Waste Container

Prayer Station Instruction

1. Meditate on these verses from Luke 6:27-28. They are Jesus' words to you.
“But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.”
2. As you ponder on the above verses, consider who some of the people are in your life whom you may consider “enemies” or “difficult people you deal with” in your life.

3. When a name (or names) pop into your head, pick up a stone and use one of the markers to print the person's initials on the stone.
4. While holding the stone in your hand, say a **"Prayer of Blessing"** for that person. Look for the good things in that person's life and give thanks for them.
5. After praying a blessing upon that person, wash the stone in the water. Imagine God washing away the bad feelings you hold against that person as the water washes the ink off.
6. When your heart is free, take the stone(s) with you as a reminder of the person you prayed for.
7. When you have no more names to consider, thank God that in blessing your "enemy", you have been able to forgive them and now consider them your friend.
8. Ask God to give you practical ways to show them they are your friends. You may want to write down in your notebook how you will let them know you have forgiven them.
9. Should no names come to your mind as enemies or difficult people in your life, thank God for that.
10. What will you take away with you from this exercise? Jot it down in your notebook.

When your heart is free, continue to the next station.

PRAYER STATION # 4: Lighting of Hope

Supplies:

Candle and candlestick holder

Matches or other candle lighter

(If you use matches, provide a place for the used match)

Prayer Station Instructions

1. Meditate on these verses from Romans 5:1-5:

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

2. Life sometimes brings unexpected events to us. Some of these we receive with great joy. Some of them bring with them brokenness and we think that there is no way out of them, no way to change them and we can't find a way forward.
3. Think now of a hope you have for yourself or even for your church. Do you believe God cares about your brokenness and that He has a plan to help you through this situation? Where do you see light beginning to dawn in this dark time?
4. Light the candle which for centuries has been a symbol representing the offering up of a prayer to God.
5. Now in prayer, share your hope with God. Just as the flame lights up from the candle, envision your prayer rising up to God. Realize that God is listening to your prayer and will respond.
6. Listen quietly for God to speak to you. He may respond with a fresh understanding of your situation, a verse from the Bible, a new-found peace indicating you are handing this brokenness to Him or in some other way. Jot that response in your notebook.
7. When you are finished praying, blow out your candle.
8. What one thing has God impressed on your heart as you have done this exercise? Write about it in your notebook.

Proceed to the next station when you are ready to move on.

PRAYER STATION # 5: Being Christ Like

Supplies:

Turkey Slices (that don't need refrigeration)

Nuts

Mint Patties

Granola Bars

Raisins

Wafers

Dried Apricots

Prayer Station Instructions

1. Read carefully these verses from II Corinthians 3:17-18:

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

2. As you read this passage, especially notice how the Spirit of the Lord works in us and brings us more and more to be like Him so we reflect His glory in our relationships.
3. Ponder what it means to become like Christ? When we choose to follow Christ, we give ourselves to Him, invite Him to live in our hearts and begin to live a Christ-like life. The Holy Spirit starts to change us from the inside out, making us into the people God meant us to be. As we are becoming more like Christ, we are becoming what God intended us to be: people of discipline, honesty, love, humility, patience, kindness, mercy and grace.
4. Before you are several different kinds of foods. Each of these foods represents a different characteristic of Christ. Choose one of the foods you see. Find that food listed and read what characteristic it represents. Do the same with each food item. Taste each food as you ponder on the characteristic of Christ it represents. Examine your life before God and see if you demonstrate this characteristic. Ask God to make you more like Him in this area of your life.

Turkey Slices: Turkey slices represent **Discipline**. They stick to your ribs and give you stamina. As you eat a slice of it, pray that God will fill you with strength and self control, that you will be changed into a person with discipline—discipline to love God and obey His commandments. Think about how the food you eat becomes a part of you. Imagine how the Holy Spirit will do the same, changing you into a person with discipline. If some area of discipline comes to your mind that you need to talk with God about, take time to do that. Consider discipline of time or discipline of finances or whatever God brings to your mind.

Nuts: Nuts represent **Honesty**. As you hold some nuts in your hand, taste one. One is never enough. Honesty is something that needs to become a habit—honesty in our relationships, honesty with God, honesty in all areas of life. Consider if there is any area where you are keeping truth from being expressed. Pray that God will help you examine yourself and help you choose to be honest in all situations. Just as the food you are eating becomes a part of you, imagine how the Holy Spirit will do the same, changing you into a person of integrity. Is there an area in your life that you need to ask God to help you become more honest?

Mint Patties: Mint Patties represent **Love**. As you taste one of them, pray that God will fill you with love—love for God, love for self, love for your family. Just as the candy tastes good and becomes a part of you, imagine how the Holy Spirit does the same with you, filling you with love for others. How are your love relationships? Are they growing?

Granola Bars: Granola Bars represent **Humility**. Take one in your hand. As you do, pray that God will give you opportunities to serve and that you will be bold enough to do so. Think about how when you eat the oat bar, it becomes a part of you, then imagine how the Holy Spirit does the same with you, changing

you into a humble person. Where would you like to be more active in service in the church, the community or?

Raisins: Raisins represent **Patience**. It takes a long time for grapes to reach maturity and then reach the right stage of dryness so you can enjoy them as raisins. Enjoy eating these raisins. Think how they are good to eat by themselves as a snack, how they add goodness to cookies or other pastries or salads. Patience is a beautiful characteristic that God uses in people to build good and strong relationships. As you taste these raisins, pray that God will fill you with patience. Think about how the food you are eating becomes a part of you, then imagine how the Holy Spirit is doing the same with you, filling you with patience for others. Are there areas in your life right now where you particularly need to focus on growing patience? If so, talk with God about them now.

Wafers: The wafers represent **Kindness**. As you hold one in your hand, pray that God will give you opportunities to show kindness to others and that you will not be too busy to do so. Just as the wafer becomes a part of you when you eat it, imagine how the Holy Spirit does the same with you, changing you into a person of kindness. What acts of kindness come to your mind that you want to do for your family or church family or neighbors?

Dried Apricots: Dried apricots represent **Grace**. Hold a piece in your hand and as you do, pray that God will help you see those moments when you should show grace to others and that you will not be too prideful to do so. Just as dried apricots becomes a part of you when you eat it, imagine how the Holy Spirit does the same with you, changing you into a person of grace. As you eat this dried fruit, ask God to help you give grace to someone who has hurt you or mistreated you in some way.

5. Which one of these characteristics seems to particularly stand out to you as something you need to ask God to help you develop more? Take time to talk with God about that and seek His guidance.
6. In your notebook, sum up what you have learned from this exercise. List some things you, with God's help, are going to strive to do to develop these characteristics.

When you are ready, move on to the next station.

PRAYER STATION # 6: Fruits of the Spirit

Supplies:

Fruit juice snacks or bottles of various fruit juices such as lemonade, orangeade with small cups for people to pour the juice into.

Waste container

Prayer Station Instructions

1. Read carefully this verse from Galatians 5:22

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Do some of these fruits of the Spirit sound familiar from the characteristics you thought about at the last station. Ponder this verse.

Have you ever thought why Paul called it fruit? Possibly it is because fruit grows. Some of these may still be in the bud stage in your life. Yet some of them have already become beautiful, fragrant and fragile blossoms. Those blossoms give way to small, hard, unripe fruit that, over time, grows and develops to full maturity. This process takes time.

2. Consider which of these fruit of the Spirit you have least in your life.

3. Open the fruit snack and sip on it. Specifically pray that God will fill you with that fruit(s) and grow it in you. Let the symbol of you drinking that fruit juice be a symbol of your openness to God changing you and filling you.
4. Jot in your notebook what you have learned from this exercise.

When you are ready, move on to the next station.

PRAYER STATION # 7: You are a Child of God

Supplies:

Mirror
Tablet of paper
Pen

Prayer Station Instructions

1. Meditate on this verse from Genesis 1:26
“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image...’
2. God has created you as a very special person with unique characteristics. He created you in His image. Pause to think how special that is! He loves you and wants you to reflect Him in all you do.
3. Feel your pulse, which is caused by the heart pumping the blood running through you. What you feel is life! A gift from God, your Maker!
4. Look in the mirror. What do you see? Just a body? A soul? A mind? When you see yourself do you cringe or do you praise God?
5. Look closely in the mirror now, and ask God to show you the real you in His sight. Then take a sheet of paper from the tablet provided and write a short prayer. When you get home, place that note on a mirror in your bathroom to remind you what you have prayed. You could put something like “May others see Christ in me.” “Use me to love others.” “Help me to love as Jesus loved.” “Thank you, Lord, for creating me special.” “Help me know that I am Your child.”
6. What will you carry away from this exercise? Write about it in your notebook.

When your heart is free, move on to the next station.

PRAYER STATION # 8: Reaching Beyond Myself

Supplies:

Flashlight

Prayer Station Instructions

1. What does this verse from Matthew 5:16 say to you today?
“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”
2. You have spent time thinking about yourself and your relationship with God. Now remember that God wants you to be a light to others, helping them make right choices and following Jesus.
3. Turn on the flashlight and think how God gives you light on your path of life.
4. Consider how your light is shining for Jesus in the following circumstances.
In your marriage
In your family
In your work
In your church
In your community
In the world

5. Is God inviting you to be a light in some place where He is not known or worshiped? How will you respond?
6. Write in your notebook an area where you sense you can be a better light for Christ.

When you are ready, move on to the next station.

PRAYER STATION # 9: Making Disciples of all Nations

Supplies:

Globe or World Map

Designate where Iowa Yearly Meeting Missions are located

If possible, use pictures of missionaries working in these areas

Prayer List of Mission Ministries Iowa Yearly Meeting promotes and supports for each participant to take with them.

Prayer Station Instructions:

1. Jesus said, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*
2. It is Jesus’ desire that people from all over the world will come to know Him. He has chosen to use His followers to carry that message to all people. What if Jesus is planning on you to carry His love and message to someone where you work? He wants our country to return to His ways and principles. Do you look at your place of work as the mission field God has laid before you? How would your job site look if you followed the principles laid out by God? With God’s help, your influence at your job-site can change your workplace.
3. God calls some people to cross cultures with His message. It takes a lot of courage and waiting before God to learn another culture and language and become effective in sharing His word. Is God calling you into this kind of ministry? How will you answer?
4. God doesn’t call everyone to move out of our comfort zones but He does call us to pray for those who are called. He calls us to give financially to support their ministry. He does want us to give hospitality if the opportunity arises to those who want to share the work God is doing. Look at the globe (world map) and notice where Iowa Yearly Meeting is involved in making disciples of all nations. Will you take a prayer card and pray for these missionaries and the people they minister to? Will you help support these ministries so God’s plan that peoples of the whole world will know Him as Lord and Savior of their lives?
5. Take a copy of the ministries Iowa Yearly Meeting promotes and supports. Slip it into your Bible and pray for them regularly. May God bless you.
6. Jot in your notebook if God has spoken to you to become more involved in missions. Ask God to help you be faithful in following through with your involvement.

Thank you for participating in this **Prayer Labryinth**. The Missions Board hopes you have been blessed, that you have experienced God in a more personal way and that you have a greater vision for sharing God’s love throughout the world. Your missions committee clerk in your church has instructions for doing a Prayer Labryinth at your meeting.