

Music in the labyrinth



Children stand around the outside edge. At the entrance, the teacher starts up a rhythm that the children join in. Followed by the children the teacher walks to the centre, stops and increases the speed of the rhythm so that the children move out faster and reform the circle around the edge. The teacher comes out last. Discuss how they felt when they entered and when they came out. Use different rhythms to move around the labyrinth. How does this make you feel?



Useful web sites

<http://labyrinthsociety.org>
www.labyrinthresourcegroup.org
www.labyrinth.org.uk
<http://www.labyrinthos.net>

Peace in the labyrinth

Using a steady drum beat the children journey to the centre. If a child feels that they have a problem, (at home, with maths or falling out with a friend - they don't have to say what it is unless they want to) they can stay at the centre. On the next journey inwards, the other children hold their palms upwards as if giving help to those who need it. As they pass the centre, they put their palms downwards as if releasing some of the person's negative energy. Afterwards the children at the centre discuss if they felt any difference, and what about the givers, did they feel anything?



Use this process for larger issues that may affect the whole class such as a death or illness (place a photo or other relevant item at the centre). To represent their concerns, place a container of pebbles for children to pick up as they pass the entrance. Holding it reminds them to think. At the centre they discard the pebble into another container symbolising leaving the problem behind. As they leave think about their feelings now the concern is behind them.

Adapt these ideas for celebrations, parties, and festivals as well.

6. Labyrinths for Schools



Schools use labyrinths in many ways and each child has a different experience. Tell them about the effects and benefits of walking the labyrinth and encourage them to walk it quietly together. Often they calm down, become more peaceful, and less aggressive. Activities in the labyrinth help children to resolve problems, mend relationships, build teams and grieve a loss.

For more information visit:

Rushcliffe Country Park, Mere Way,
Ruddington, Nottingham, NG11 6JS

Email: countrypark@rushcliffe.gov.uk

Web: www.friends-of-rcp.co.uk



History of labyrinths

People have been making labyrinths for thousands of years, before the first history books were written, before people even knew that there was something called history. You can find ancient labyrinths all over the world, in Britain, in Italy, in Greece, in Egypt, in India and even in America. The oldest designs are known as classical labyrinths and can be found carved in rocks and on old coins.



Some of the best-known labyrinths were built at the same time as the great Medieval Cathedrals in Europe. One of the most famous is at Chartres in France.

You can still walk eleven circuits to the centre and then eleven back again just as people did over eight hundred years ago. It is beautiful and ancient, but if you don't look down at the floor you might never even see this wonder.

One very old labyrinth in England is at the village of Wing in Rutland. It was built at about the same time as the one at Chartres Cathedral.

They say that people who were too poor to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem would travel the same distance by walking the labyrinth every day, praying all the time. How many days and prayers would that take?

Play in the labyrinth

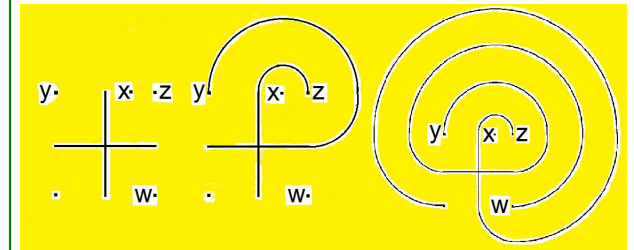
First, let the children do whatever comes naturally to them. Run in and out, pass each other with high fives, clap, sing. Watch and then discuss. How did they feel when they first saw it? How do they feel now? Now let them loose again, do they do things differently? Discuss.



Enter the labyrinth with coloured flags or scarves. Choose one person to lead the group in: they can walk, dance, or wave the flags. How do the children behave with, say, all blue ones? What about all yellow ones? Does the colour make a difference? Discuss how different colours make them feel. Just being outdoors and feeling the freedom of the space and yet the safety of the path may lead to some interesting thoughts or written words.

Use stations (see leaflet 4) asking the children to notice how many different things there are around them. Stations might suggest they notice sounds, birds, smells, effect of wind, insects, their shadow, etc. Discuss and list all the observations made.

Maths in the labyrinth



These diagrams show you how to draw a three-circuit labyrinth (See leaflet 5). Using the last picture and a ruler measure how far is it in a straight line from the entrance to the centre at x . Now place a thread at the entrance and find how far it is along the path. How many more times longer is it than going direct?

Where is the labyrinth at its widest? If the path is 2m wide, how wide is the labyrinth?

Notice that the paths drawn above the top of the first diagram are all semi-circles with centres at x . What is the length of the inner wall in this part remembering that the circumference of a full circle is $2\pi r$ and that r is half the path width? Now calculate the length of the other three walls in this part. In the bottom left hand corner, the walls are quarter circles centred on y , and in the bottom right hand corner centred on z . The very bottom curve has centre at w . Now calculate the total length of wall, not forgetting the cross in the centre.

Repeat with the seven-circuit labyrinth! Try working out the length of a path of width p with walls of width w .