

And he said to them, "Go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."
~Gospel of Mark 16:15

Walk back to circle of picnic tables. Read:

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name. Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness. Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them bright, precious and beautiful. Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance. Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure. Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong. Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs...Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility. ~Saint Francis, *Canticle of the Sun*, 1224

Reflect on what you experienced and observed. Groups may want to share final reflections together with the option of joining hands in a final moment of silence and prayer.

Note: The following passage may be used as a substitute for the Prayer of Azariah or the Canticle to the Sun, especially if the weather is bad!

At this also my heart trembles, and leaps out of its place. Listen, listen to the thunder of her voice and the rumbling that comes from her mouth. Under the whole heaven she lets it loose, and her lightning to the corners of the earth. After it her voice roars; she thunders with her majestic voice and she does not restrain the lightnings when her voice is heard. God thunders wondrously with her voice; she does great things that we cannot comprehend. For to the snow she says, 'Fall on the earth'; and the shower of rain, her heavy shower of rain, serves as a sign on everyone's hand, so that all whom she has made may know it. Then the animals go into their lairs and remain in their dens. From its chamber comes the whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds. By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen fast. She loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter her lightning. They turn round and round by her guidance, to accomplish all that she commands them on the face of the habitable world. Whether for correction, or for her land, or for love, she causes it to happen. ~Job 37:1-13 NRSV

SELF GUIDED LABYRINTH WALK (INDIVIDUAL OR GOUP)

Begin at the circle of picnic tables. The purpose of this labyrinth walk is to help you go inward to connect with your inner self and the divine and listen for guidance for your life.

A labyrinth can be described as a spiraling or circling path that leads to a center. They have been used worldwide, but in our Western culture some of the earliest records of their use come from the Greek island of Crete. During the Middle Ages they were also prevalent along the Scandinavian coastlines and were used in Gothic cathedrals to conclude religious pilgrimages. Today they are experiencing a renewal of use as a means of spiritual communion with the inner self or with the spirit. The labyrinth here at Cope Environmental Center is mowed into a goldenrod field to the north of the property.

Labyrinth walking is a kind of contemplative or mindful walking. The point of this kind of walking is not to get somewhere, but to walk slowly and pay attention to the walking itself. Pay close attention to the movements of your body and the feeling of contact between your feet and the earth. Enter a rhythm of stepping and breathing. You may find your in-breath happening when you step down with your left foot and your out-breath happening when you step down with your right foot. Depending on how fast you walk this may happen on every other step. Groups may enter a rhythm of stepping and breathing together.

As you walk to the labyrinth you can prepare for walking it by tuning in to nature and heightening your sense of awareness. Pay close attention to your other senses: sight, sound, and smell. Notice the varying shades of color in the grass, bushes, and trees you pass. Hear any breeze in the trees and feel it on your face. Listen for bird songs and the scurrying of animals. Smell the air and the life about you. If your thoughts wander somewhere else, gently bring them back to the here and now of what you are doing and observing.

It is often easiest to feel the spirit in silence. Psalm 46:10 says, "be still and know that I am God." So keep conversation to a minimum.

Begin by reading the following:

In beauty may I walk.

All day long may I walk.

Through the returning seasons may I walk.

On the trail marked with pollen may I walk.

With grasshoppers about my feet may I walk.

With dew about my feet may I walk.

With beauty may I walk.

With beauty before me, may I walk.

With beauty behind me, may I walk.

With beauty above me, may I walk.

With beauty below me, may I walk.

With beauty all around me, may I walk.

In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, lively, may I walk.

In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, living again, may I walk.

It is finished in beauty.

It is finished in beauty

~Navajo Blessing Way Prayer

Walk to the labyrinth entrance just west of the North Wetland off the "G" trail. This labyrinth is a variation of the classic seven circuit labyrinth. What is different about it is that it has a short spiral entrance or exit as well as a long one. If you have the time, use the long path. The labyrinth can be walked individually or in a group.

At the labyrinth entrance read:

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. ~Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ~Jeremiah 31:33

Walk slowly to center of labyrinth. Sit on something to keep dry. Read the following:

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. ~ John 14:15-17

Take ten minutes to go inside as deeply as possible, getting in touch with your inner self, deepest longings and inner guidance. Afterwards self reflect or invite sharing from a group.

After reflecting or sharing read:

Sun and moon, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Stars of heaven, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Every shower and dew, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. All winds, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Fire and heat, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Winter and summer, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Dews and storms of snow, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Ice and cold, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Frost and snow, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Nights and days, bless the Lord; bless and exalt her above all for ever. Light and darkness, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. Let the earth bless the Lord; praise and exalt her above all for ever. ~Prayer of Azariah 1 40-52 WEB

Walk to labyrinth entrance and read:

The grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never dried all at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor is ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal dawn and gloaming, on sea and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls. ~John Muir