



Peaceful Hearts



Photo credit: Maia Scott, with gratitude

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Peaceful Hearts



Photo credit: Maia Scott, with gratitude

On World Labyrinth Day in Educational Settings 2023 come to the dance between your heart and your breath where you can create calm, inner, focused space. Coming to places of quiet and stillness, attuning to Nature, deep listening, and deep awareness are the threads that weave their way throughout this material. We're calling them *Heartfulness Practices*. They sit at the core of what we offer in our labyrinth resources this year. The intention is that walkers come to their heart centre through any of the suggested practices and techniques before each labyrinth walk. We love that "listen" and "silent" are anagrams. "Listen" and "silent" are integral to these practices and techniques. Entering the labyrinth, our breath prepares us for our journey towards a peaceful heart.

Big Ideas:

- Labyrinth walking with *Heartfulness Practices* can be learned and practiced
- Calming, settling and focusing before a labyrinth walk are big steps in our heart-breath dance
- *Heartfulness Practices* can bring us to a personal place of peace
- Peace in the world begins with inner peace

Big Question:

- How can labyrinth walking and *Heartfulness Practices* help people?

Reflective Question:

- In using these *Heartfulness Practices* with the labyrinth, what have I learned about myself? (see "Time to Reflect" on page 12)



Heartfulness Practices

You know your students. Choose what would work best for them so that they become familiar with the respective technique/s. Some of the techniques may already be familiar from school-based programs, others you may like to introduce over time. Learning a variety enables young people to make choices and decisions about what works best for them as they become more autonomous in their labyrinth walking practice.

Legacy Labyrinth Project Heart Brain Coherence Video

<https://youtu.be/yYHZUkk6t1s>

This video produced by Legacy Labyrinth Project gives a helpful, visual and clear explanation of how heart and brain work together to calm and focus the individual. The technique for achieving Heart-Brain Coherence outlined in Steps 1 and 2 was used successfully with students during WLDES 2022. A print form of the Steps can be seen below.

Two Steps to Heart Brain Coherence

Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/yYHZUkk6t1s> and summarized with permission and approval from Legacy Labyrinth Project whose Big Connection labyrinth research work has its foundation in HeartMath® Institute research.

STEP 1 Breathe through your heart

- Shift your focus into the area of your heart
- Begin to slow down your breath and imagine it coming through your heart
- Feel your heart rate begin to slow down

STEP 2 Activate a positive feeling

- Create a positive feeling to the best of your ability, like calmness, happiness, love for someone
- Keep that feeling and bring it into your body as you continue your heart breath as if carrying it to your brain (pause)
- Keep the connection between your heart and your brain; sustaining the feeling of inner calm

Calming Breaths: Finger Labyrinth

Starting at the opening of a finger labyrinth, use your finger to trace around the outside of the labyrinth: breathing in for one half of the circuit, breathing out for the second half. Repeat 3 times.

Another consideration for tracing around: use a finger of your non-dominant hand.



Heartfulness Practices (cont.)

Slippery Dip

Standing at the threshold in a semi-circle, look to the distance beyond the boundary of the labyrinth as you take your first breath, look to the far edge of the labyrinth as you take your second breath, look to the threshold of the labyrinth as you take your third breath. Lower your eyes and slippery dip your breath down to your heart.

School SEL Program Techniques

For example: Belly Breath, Flat Tyre, Body Scan, Bubble Breathing, Shape Breathing, Cloud Breaths, Flower Breaths

Come to Your Senses: 5 4 3 2 1

Be aware of 5 different things that you can see, 4 different things you can hear, 3 different things you can feel, 2 different things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste. As you come to your senses you come to yourself.

Listen with Curiosity

Focus on the sounds around you for several minutes: which are near, which are far? What are the subtle differences, the not-so-subtle? What is making the sound? Is it continuous or intermittent?

Observe with Curiosity

Look around you for several minutes. What is above you, below, behind, in front? What are the colours, variations in colour? How do the shapes merge or stand apart? What is the smallest shape you can see? The largest? How many different shapes? Are they curved or bound by straight lines? Or both? Where can you see patterns? What are the differences between patterns?

Feel with Curiosity

Engage your sense of touch. Feel your skin, what do you notice about it in different places on your body? What about your clothing, how many different textures can you feel? Touch the hair on your head, arms, legs. Does it feel the same? How about your breath? In how many different ways can you feel it?



Heartfulness Practices (cont.)

Mini-beast Safari

Take an up-close observation and see how many little creatures or mini-beasts you can find in the plants and surroundings near you. Take note of the details: body, head legs, eyes, feelers, shell. Take note of how they move, or not. Have they noticed you? What might they be saying?

Plant Safari

On one plant you can find a lot to observe. Take careful note of its overall shape, structure, colour variations, leaf shapes, flowers, seed pods, fruits, buds and petals. Does it have a fragrance? If it's ok to touch, what kinds of textures are there on the various parts?

Raisin Exercise

Give each student a raisin to hold in the palm of their hand. Then ask them to use all of their senses to study it and to pretend that they are describing it to someone else. They should aim to give as much information as possible so that it couldn't be mistaken for something else.

Zoom In, Zoom Out

Zooming In: this can be indoors or outdoors. Observe, listen, smell, touch an object in a close, magnified way. Note everything!

Zooming out: best outdoors or through a window. Observe eg the horizon shape, flight patterns of birds, directions of sounds, lines of buildings, noting the most minute of details.

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Heartfulness Practices (cont.)

Examples for Individualising a Walk



If students are familiar with several heartfulness techniques, and introduced to more, they could be encouraged to individualise their own personal labyrinth walks and be invited to write their own walking formula: ie. This is YOUR walk. What is going to be your recipe for your walk? eg

- you may want to pause at every turn or along the way
- you may want to take time in the centre (see “Time to Reflect” on page 12)



Some Ideas

1. **Focus on breath**, the ability to be able to pause and focus, and enable deep listening.



2. **Stop on each turn**, take 3 breaths and continue



3. **Pilgrim walk**: on a walking labyrinth: feet together, starting with right foot walk 3 slow steps forward, rock back onto left foot, and repeat: 3 slow steps forward, rock back onto left foot, and repeat along the entire labyrinth path. Can be done in a group with a hand on the shoulder of the person in front, creating a unified, ebbing and flowing of mindful energy.





Heartfulness Practices (cont.)

4. **A Mirror Reflection of Self.** Place a bowl of water beside the labyrinth entrance,
- AT THE START: look at your reflection in the water, who is the me that walks this labyrinth?
 - IN THE CENTRE: reflect: is there something I'm being asked to do?
 - AT THE END: look at your reflection in the water again, who is the me that moves on from this labyrinth?



5. **Symbolic act.** Walk in with nothing, leave behind what is interfering with a peaceful relationship with yourself or another, and take a heart out (from centre) to make something meaningful for yourself

(A consideration: walk into the labyrinth carrying a dark stone, symbolizing an interference with a peaceful relationship. Leave this stone at the centre, replacing it with a light stone or crystal for the walk out).



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Individual Walks

Remember to begin each walk with one or more of the *Heartfulness Practices*!

1. A Peaceful Heart Focus with Heart Brain Coherence

See ACTIVITY 1 worksheets beginning on page 13. Also accessible as a separate document in the WLDES 2023 collection of resources <https://aln.org.au/wlides-resources>

2. Circuits of Peace

Students use a hand drawn labyrinth or a finger labyrinth handout (see Teacher Notes). Invite them to draw a symbol of peace at every turn along the circuits (consider the number of turns and the ages of students so that it's not too overwhelming. We suggest a three-circuit classical for Juniors, a seven-circuit for Middles, and eleven-circuit for Seniors). Bring them into the moment using a Heartfulness technique. Then as they finger walk along their labyrinth path they pause at each peace symbol, placing a hand on their heart and a hand on the symbol, connecting through their breath.

Alternatively, a peace quote (see [Teacher Notes](#)) could be placed at each turn, and thoughtful consideration given to the meaning of each as the walk progresses.

3. Triple the Impact

Use a triple spiral labyrinth for this activity (see [Teacher Notes](#)). In the first spiral they place or draw something that represents them individually. In the second spiral, they draw or place something that represents their family. In the third spiral they draw or place something that represents their school, or our global family. Bring them into the moment using a Heartfulness technique. As they walk into each of the spirals, encourage them to think about how they themselves can be more heart-centred, how they can practice heart-centred love within their family, and then within their school or our global family. Pause in silence in the centre, then encourage them to carry their new resolve or intentions along the path with them, allowing the peace-filled energy to surround and radiate from them.

4. A Heart Montage

Research “heart” labyrinth designs (or see [Teacher Notes](#)).

Each student recreates their heart design favourite, eg drawing, painting, with found objects, ceramic, fabric, ... anything that will make lines!

Then make a collage or montage incorporating their labyrinth design and images, symbols, and words with a peace focus ... along the paths and/or surrounding their labyrinth.



Individual Walks (cont.)

Before taking a walk on their completed labyrinth, remember to practice a Heartfulness technique!

Exhibit their works in a special place and invite others to take a mindful gallery walk.

5. Make Labyrinth Cards to Give

Invite students to think about where, or to whom, they would most like to send heart-filled waves of peace. Research “heart” labyrinth designs (or see [Teacher Notes](#)). Encourage each student to recreate a heart design favourite, reproduce it on a card, and write their message of peace. Depending on the recipient, they may also need to explain what a labyrinth is, and include some guidelines for walking a labyrinth

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Group Walks

Remember to begin each walk with one or more of the *Heartfulness Practices*!

6. Uniting in Thought and Action

Start with a map. It could be a local area, town, state, country or the world. Invite students to identify places where they would like to send peaceful/healing/harmony energy. Tag those places with labyrinth symbols (student-made or reproduced). Gather around the labyrinth in a circle, sitting or standing. Symbolically hold hands using ribbons, scarves, paper chain, etc. Allow students time to express their hopes/wishes/desires for their place of choice on the map. Bring them into the moment using a Heartfulness technique. As they walk into the labyrinth they place their hand on their heart, holding their thoughts as they progress to the centre, and there, with each breath, connecting their place of choice with their heart. As they walk out of the labyrinth, imagine the peaceful energy radiating and rippling near and far. Engage in group and/or personal reflection.

7. Peace Tree

Using either a plant in a pot or constructing a symbolic tree (Google search: Peace Tree images) invite students to help create a peace tree. What symbols would they choose to represent peace? Perhaps a symbol could represent the tree itself. Place the tree in the centre of the labyrinth. Give each student a short length of ribbon on which they write their peace wish/es. Gather around the labyrinth in a circle, sitting or standing. Bring them into the moment using a Heartfulness technique. As they walk into the labyrinth they place their hand on their heart, holding their wishes as they progress to the centre, and there they tie on or attach their ribbons to the tree. As they walk out of the labyrinth, encourage them to imagine the peaceful energy radiating out and rippling near and far. Engage in group and/or personal reflection.

8. Peace Poles

May Peace Prevail on Earth is the message displayed on peace poles <https://www.peacepoleproject.org/> The project itself unites people and promotes harmony around the planet. Why not make a circle of peace poles to surround your labyrinth or in a garden or space nearby. They could be made simply with wooden stakes, or even card tubes or polypipe threaded onto metal droppers. Involve students in researching translations of the message into different languages and applying them to their poles. When the poles are in place, prepare for your labyrinth walk. Gather in a circle around the labyrinth and poles, sitting or standing. Bring students into the moment using a Heartfulness technique. Walking into the labyrinth encourage students to focus on the oneness of our global family; in the centre stand vigil in silent prayer for peace on earth. As they walk out of the labyrinth, encourage



Group Walks (cont.)

them to imagine the peaceful energy radiating and rippling out into every corner of the planet. Engage in group and/or personal reflection.

9. Pebble Path – Spread a Little Peace

Preparation: you will need:

- a collection of pebbles, each painted with an inspirational peace symbol or word, Felt tip pens could be used instead of paint, or shapes cut out and glued onto the pebbles.
- another set of pebbles each painted with a simple 3 or 5 circuit classical labyrinth (permanent felt tip pens work well).

In the tradition of the “Painted Rocks” kindness movement, involve students in the preparation of the pebbles. Lay these at intervals along the path leading into the labyrinth (indoors or outdoors). Place the set of pebbles painted with 3 or 5 circuit classical labyrinths in a bowl or basket in the centre of your indoor or outdoor labyrinth. Bring students into the moment using a Heartfulness technique. Walking into the labyrinth encourage students to focus on the inspirational words and symbols of peace on the pebbles; in the centre stand silently in solidarity with all who wish for peace, then select a labyrinth painted pebble. As they walk out of the labyrinth with the pebble, encourage them to consider how they can be instruments of peace and help the flow of peaceful energy radiating and rippling out into every corner of the planet. Engage in group and/or personal reflection.

10. Dancing in Circle

Let us dance with the desire to spread the light of our circles in a blooming embrace of peace ... when peace shines in the heart of every person it expands and becomes visible for everyone (quoted from the ‘Circle Dance of Peace’ video below).

Circle Dance for Peace

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN51Hpla2ek&list=RDIN51Hpla2ek&start_radio=1

We are all dancers in the circle of life. Circles are symbols of harmony and unity, have their roots in every culture and civilization, and they radiate energy. So, ... get together and circle dance around or on a labyrinth!

Heartstrings Dance Videos <https://worldance.weebly.com/dance-videos.html>

Teaching Ideas – Circle Dances

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INCOK4P1IQI&t=52s>

Circle Dance for Elementary Students

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jCn7Xgru1A



Time to Reflect!

Come back to the Big Ideas, Big Question, and Reflective Question that underpin this set of resources, ***Peaceful Hearts***. Review the experiences undertaken, and invite everyone who took part to reflect on their labyrinth experience/s with any of the suggested prompts below. They could express their thoughts and feelings through any creative means.

a new understanding
a new feeling
a new question
a new insight
a new determination

I hope ...
I wonder ...
I think ...
I feel ...
I imagine ...

Before I _____ now I _____

What has this made you wonder?
What might you think more about?
What might you start?
What connections have you made?
What questions has this made you ask?



ACTIVITY 1

A PEACEFUL HEART FOCUS WITH HEART BRAIN COHERENCE

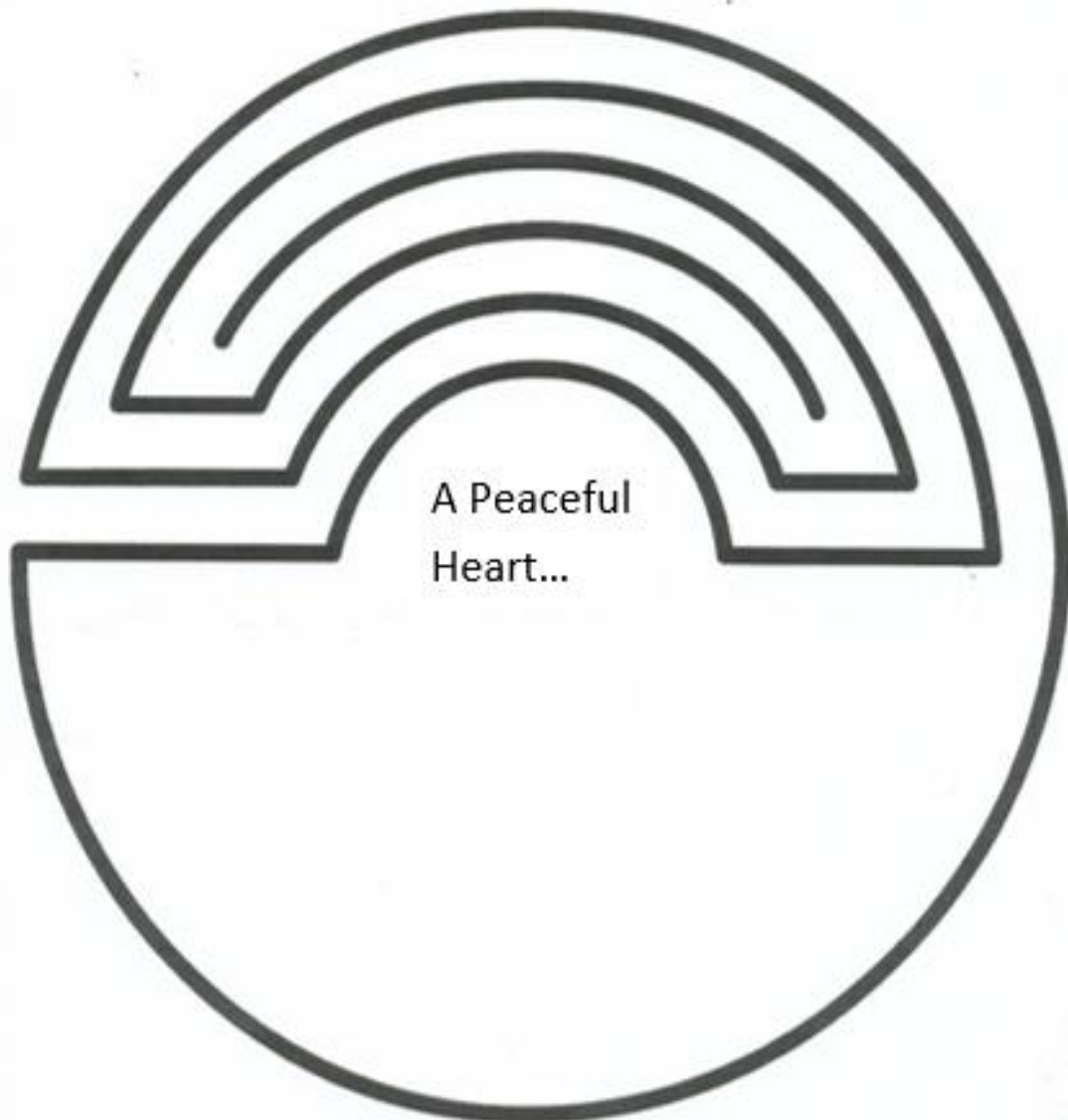


Image credit ©LearningwithLabyrinths

Reproduce/increase size of labyrinth for your purpose

THE PRACTICE:

- Introduce the labyrinth
- Preparation for the finger walk

Sitting in a comfortable position, feet on the ground.

Breath – with a finger placed at the opening of the labyrinth, trace around the perimeter of the labyrinth, breathing in for one half of the circuit, breathing out for the second half. **Repeat twice.**



FINGER LABYRINTH WALK

Entrance Reflection:

What is peace? What is a peaceful heart?

What does “peace” or having a “peaceful heart” mean to you? How does this feel?

Do you associate this with a place? A special experience?

Are you alone or is someone else with you when you have this feeling? What are you doing?

Now, slowly Finger walk the labyrinth with your “peaceful heart”. When you get to the “centre” (the second half) of this particular design, draw a picture of what you hold in your peaceful heart.

HEART BRAIN CONNECTION.

Place one hand on the picture, the other on your heart. Close your eyes. Take a breath in and visualize this peaceful experience. With each breath, imagine the breath connecting your peaceful experience and your heart. Feel the love, joy, safety, gratitude of being at peace. With each breath, feel it become stronger. Stay with these feelings for a few minutes....

**** teacher reference: short summary of heart math coherence - a quick guide
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zHuoU8yKLQ>

VARIATION:

Use the labyrinth as a response/ reflection to a shared picture book on the topic of peace. Some picture books can be accessed on YouTube.

- *What is Peace?* by Emma Damon
- *In My Heart* by Jo Witek
- *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst (student can draw own heart shape labyrinth using concept of Ariadne thread - see below)
- *The Big Book for Peace* by Ann Durell and Marilyn Sachs
- *What Does Peace Look Like* by Vladimir Radunsky
- *I am Peace* by Susan Verde

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXA3837uv3w>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocY_VVnGhSQ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqkPdIjjSFI> song (junior children)

- *Peace is an Offering* by Annette le box

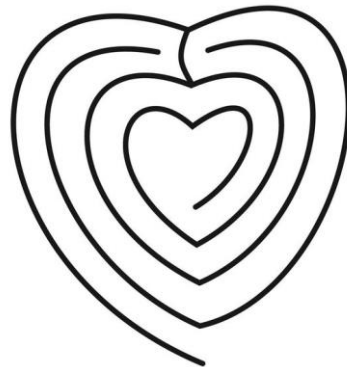
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJHfYJH29x8>



- *Peace* by Baptiste Paul and Miranda Paul .
Verse from book:
Peace is on purpose.
Peace is a choice.
Peace lets the smallest of us
have a voice.
- *Peaceful Hearts* by Andrea Team
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hntp_N_oF64







LABYRINTH HEART DESIGNS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5c3gyGOGp0> drawing odd-shaped labyrinth









Design your own heart labyrinth

1 	2 
3 	4 
5 	6 <i>Continue pattern as desired</i>
7 <i>Final Path</i> 	8



Design your own heart labyrinth

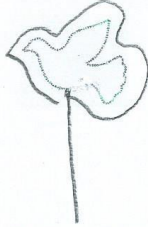
* = starting point

<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> 
<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> 
<p>5</p> <p>Repeat for desired number of circuits</p>	<p>6</p>

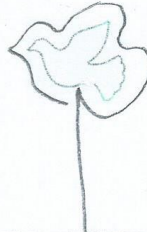


Design your own heart labyrinth

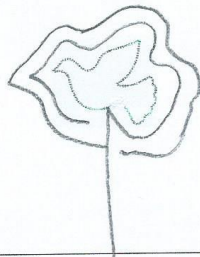
1 Draw or Copy image of a dove - symbol of peace



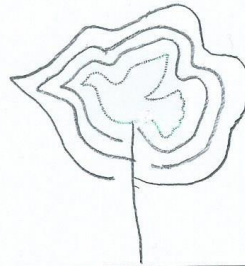
2



3



4



5 Continue for as many paths as required



6



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The power of your heart for peace <https://youtu.be/HUjkPWljrrY>