

UESDAY, 6 MARCH 2012

Tutorial: Making a Finger Labyrinth

I have long found labyrinths to be fascinating. They can be great fun - especially as you know you can't get lost! A labyrinth can also be a very helpful place for thinking and prayer. My husband made a temporary outdoor one for a large L'Arche gathering some years back. It was used by more than 200 people all at once! Not a quiet meditative experience at all, but it did underline the joyful sense of journey we undertake together in L'Arche. This is a lovely growing labyrinth at [The Bield](#) in Perthshire. There are words of Scripture written on clay tiles embedded in the grass at various places. They suggest that you walk the labyrinth with bare feet, then spend some time in the shelter in the centre. At a certain point of my life I found it a very profound way of meeting God, when I didn't have any words I could say.



A while ago, I discovered finger labyrinths - but at some cost. However, I could see how they might be really helpful for prayer - with children, with anyone who can't go to a walking labyrinth, with someone unable to express their prayer in words. I'm sure it could be used in many ways. So, after thinking and experimenting for a bit, I finally came up with this. I think I would make it again in different colours, but I wanted to use what was in my stash, and in the end, the colours I found are still symbolic to me. So, I hope you can follow these basic instructions, if you want to make one for yourself. Let me know if you get stuck!



You will need:

An image of a labyrinth, I found loads [here](#) but be nice with copyright images. Print it off or draw your own at the size you want. NB it must be big enough for your finger tip to follow the 'path'. Mine was nearly 30cm/12" across. Use paper for easy cutting or thin card for a reusable template.

Knife with sharp blade

Cutting board

Scissors

Backing fabric - something thick like felt, wool or polar fleece, a little bigger than your labyrinth.

A towel

A pen or chalk for marking the fabric

Pins

Thick wool or roving

Needle felting needle(s)

Sponge base for needle felting - I just use a thick kitchen sponge

Fabric for sewing the labyrinth onto - to make a wall hanging, lap quilt, cushion cover - as you wish.



Start by carefully cutting out the labyrinth pattern - I cut away the black path that I wanted my finger tip to walk along. Cut a piece of fabric a little bigger than the labyrinth as a base. I used some thick, soft grass green polar fleece.





Fold a towel to make a pad. Place the base fabric onto it, then the labyrinth pattern. You will need to make sure the pattern is lying flat. Hold in place with a few pins.



Draw the path of the labyrinth onto the fabric. Make sure you draw along the middle of the paths. Then you can remove the template.



This is what it will look like. You then need to lay your chosen wool on the line and needle felt it on, using the sponge to protect your hands and board. You could also simply sew the wool on, if you don't have a needle felting needle. Follow the path, covering your line. Make sure the ends of the wool are very firmly attached



It takes time, but I found the slow making of the labyrinth a gently meditative exercise in itself.



This is the finished labyrinth. You can see the very thick wool makes the labyrinth 3D, which gives a very definite path for your finger tip to explore.



You can leave it as it is, or sew it onto a base. I zigzagged mine onto thick soft wool fabric - I think texture is very important for this project. Then I made the fabric into a simple envelope style cushion cover. It can be used with or without a cushion. You could embroider some words on the front around the labyrinth, or needle felt some wool shapes or symbols. It would be nice to make one with a larger centre area for this. I plan to make a small pocket for the back to hold some cards with Bible verses on. Psalm 139 is especially good to use. I plan to use mine throughout Lent, meditating on a few verses at a time.