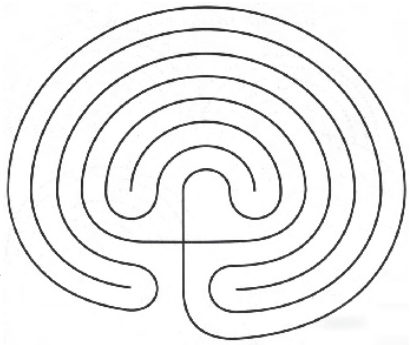
Building A Classical Labyrinth

Credit for basic instructions: We thank Robert Ferré of Labyrinth Enterprises (*http://www.labyrinth-enterprises.com*) for these basic instructions.

• *INSTRUCTIONS* •
Constructing a Classical Labyrinth

Materials:
Masking tape or blue painters tape (450 feet for two-foot wide paths), or line paint/chalk for grass application. Buy extra, as it is better to have more on hand and return the extra, rather than having to run out to the store in the middle of your project to get more supplies. (On hardwood floors, painters tape doesn't leave marks).



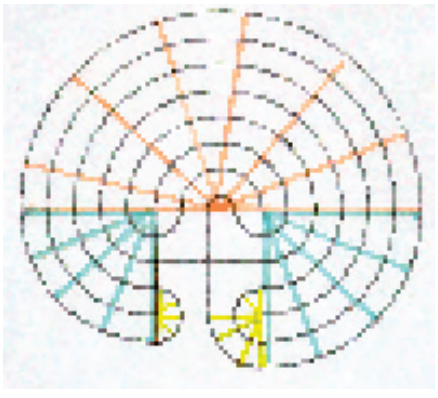
Instructions:
The basic technique for making a classical 7-circuit masking tape labyrinth is the same as for the Chartres labyrinth. You use a measuring guide to put down bits of tape, later connecting them with the wide masking tapeto produce the labyrinth. Only the pattern and the geometry are different. To the right is the pattern I usually make, which has an expanded center. It works well for groups.

DETERMINING THE DIMENSIONS
Fasten the measuring rope in the center and mark on it the width of the paths — eight marks for the eight circles that enclose the seven circuits. In the traditional design, the center is small, just the size of the path, as if the path just came to an end there. Since the width is that of the path, the first mark on the guide rope, being the radius, is equal to half the width of the path. All subsequent marks are one path width apart. I usually double the diameter of the center, making it two path-widths across. This also makes the marks on the guide rope easy, as even the first mark is one path-width from the stake.

In expanding the center, the location of the first mark on the guide determines the size of the center. It could be 10 path-widths for example, so that you could put a fire pit in the center, or some benches for sitting. The remaining paths are equally spaced.

The following instructions will be for the labyrinth shown above. Remember that the Chartres labyrinth had eleven paths on either side of the center? Well, in the classic labyrinth you have seven paths on either side. The entire horizontal diameter, therefore, consists of 14 paths plus the center. In this case the center is two paths wide, so the entire horizontal diameter is 16 PW. Thus, if the paths were three feet wide, the labyrinth would be 48 feet wide. Two-foot-wide paths give a diameter of 32 feet, whereas one-foot-wide paths make a labyrinth 16 feet across.

You will note that the labyrinth is not completely round. The height to width ratio is something like 14 to 16. As before, you can work backwards to determine your path-widths. If your space is 24 feet wide, then you divide by 16 and find that the paths should be 18 inches wide.



DRAWING THE TOP CIRCLES
With the Chartres pattern, we drew concentric circles. The classic labyrinth, however, is not round, it is sort of mushroom shaped. That's because there isn't a single center for the circles, such as for round labyrinths. Rather, there are five different centers for quarter or half circles which comprise the labyrinth. The illustration to the right shows the five different center points from which the labyrinth emerges.

We begin by drawing half-circles, which become the top of the labyrinth. Picture a horizontal line that passes through the center of the labyrinth where your measuring guide is attached. Start from a horizontal position and swing the guide rope across the top of the labyrinth until it again reaches horizontal. On the guide rope are the marks for the spacing of the paths, which determine the size of the labyrinth.

As you swing the guide from horizontal back to horizontal, stop every couple of feet to allow volunteers to put bits of masking tape (or, if you are doing this outdoors, they can be putting down rocks) at each of the line marks on the guide. It's quite amazing that in front of you is nothing, and behind you are eight circles.

You can wait until the end to connect the dots, or do it with each segment. Let's go ahead and connect the half circles. Now we have completed the top part of the labyrinth.

MAKING THE LOWER QUADRANTS

The remainder of the pattern is made mostly of quarter circles which emanate from four different points. You need to move your center post to each new location in succession. First, go to the upper marks, to the left and right of center. For a left-handed labyrinth (first turn to the left) the upper left point is at the end of the third half-circle. The upper right point is at the end of the second half-circle (counting from the center outward). Reverse them for a right-handed pattern.

Move the device that holds your guide to each of these points. As shown in the illustration to the right, the first line, closest to the centerpoint, will be a half-circle. The rest will be quarter-circles.

Before completing the circles, make the cross. This helps to see where the final circles will be located. The second diagram to the right should clearly show the location of the vertical and horizontal arms of the cross.

Please note, if you have made the center's diameter more than the width of the pathway, you will (at this point) need to add a horizontal length of line at the end of each of the lowest four quarter circles; this addition will be the length of however wider the center is than one width of the pathway (ie.- if the center is 6 feet in diameter and the width of the path is only 3 feet, add 3 more feet of horizontal straight line on to the end of the four lowest quarter circles which are on the right side.

The centerpoints for the lower circles are located at the ends of the second lines below the horizontal arm of the cross. On the left there is a half-circle. On the right, a half-circle and then a quarter-circle connecting the outer line to the bottom of the cross. Voila, you have made a classical 7-circuit labyrinth. With a little practice, you will find that you can do this very quickly.

ENLARGING THE CENTER

You can make the center as large as you would like (to hold a fire pit, for example) by making the mark for the first circle further out on the guide rope. All of the other circles remain equally spaced the desired distance for the path width. When the top circles are made larger, a compensation of equal magnitude must be made in the lower quadrant opposite from the entrance. In this case, it would be the lower right quadrant.

When the centerpoint is at the top right, at the end of the second half-circle, the first line is a half circle and the others are quarter-circles. You will immediately see that there is a considerable gap between the end of those quarter-circles and the vertical arm of the cross. That gap is filled by horizontal straight lines, equal in length to the amount the center was expanded beyond the normal classical design. These are shown in the diagram as dotted lines. The turns on either side of the vertical arm of the cross remain in the same place as before.

Now that you understand about expanded centers, you will see that my illustrations above are actually of a slightly expanded center. In such case, the horizontal lines aren't very apparent. But if the center is large, then the labyrinth gets much more mushroom-like.

Now that you have the basics, make a few labyrinths on your own and it will soon become second nature. Send me some photos.

FIGURE 6.2A
Half circles with tape marks

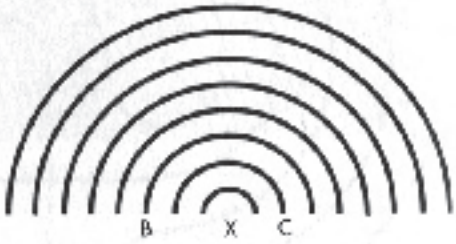


FIGURE 6.2B
Filled in half circles

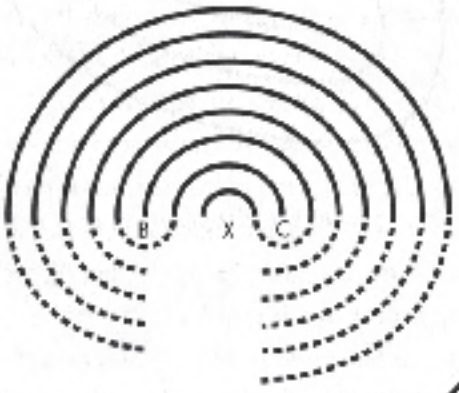


FIGURE 6.2C
Quarter circle tape marks from B and C

FIGURE 6.2D
Filled in quarter circles

FIGURE 6.2E
Extended straight lines

FIGURE 6.2F
Filling in last lines

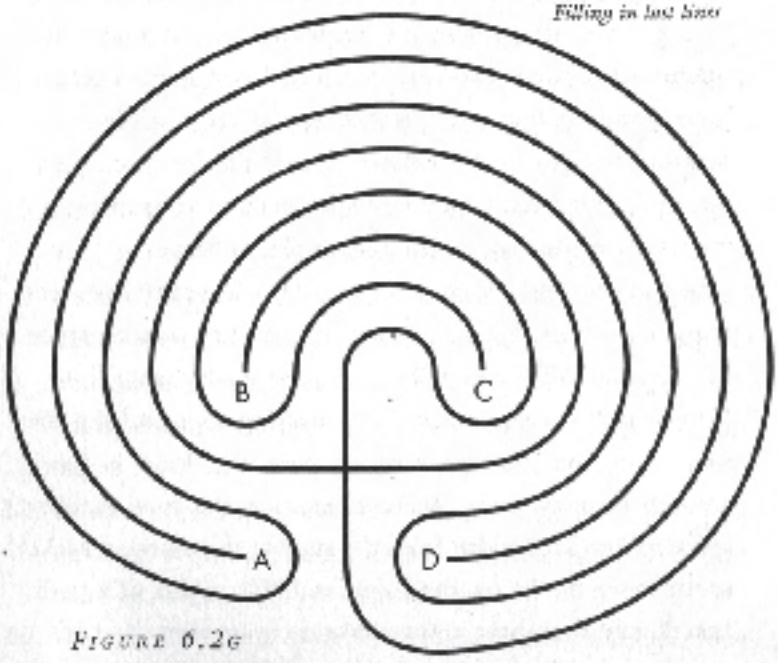


FIGURE 6.2G