

SEASONS OF OUR LIVES
MONTH FIVE – JANUARY 2026
Assignments for January 11 to February 14, 2026

NATURE QUEST

Go out into nature, alone, prepared with what you need (i.e. water, appropriate clothing, journal, pen, blanket, snack, etc.). Go with an open mind, an open heart, and an open spirit. Allow yourself to be guided to a place where you can sit and *'just be'*. This could be a favorite spot or somewhere you have not been before. Settle in, both with your body and your inner being. Be a quiet observer of what is happening around you – what you see, smell, feel, hear, taste, and sense – and notice what is taking place within you. Do not judge. Just be present, receptive, and aware. Consider staying between one and three hours. Take your time. Before you leave, give thanks for what you have received during this time.

RESPONSE TO YOUR NATURE QUEST

Reflect on your time in nature. You may journal right away or you may like to take some time to be with your experience before recording it.

When you are ready, creatively respond to your nature quest. You could do this by writing a poem, journaling, creating a picture or making something out of clay or other material, creating a collage from magazine photos or from things you collect in nature. Be creative!

Take a photo of what you create which can be used to share with others including your mentor and colleagues and as a memory of this nature quest.

READINGS:

The Nest in the Stream: Lessons from Nature on Being with Pain (Michael Kearney, MD)
Seven Stories of Nature: Story No 7 – Polaris

AUDIO:

Season of Winter, Circle of Life, Joyce Rupp and Macrina Weiderkehr (Megan Vacheresse, voice)

VIDEOS:

Soul and Science - Lesson Two: Wounded Healers – 10 min (Michael Kearney)

MUSIC:

Vivaldi: The Four Seasons Violin Concerto, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra
F Minor, Op.8 No3, RV 297 'Winter': III Allegro (3.08 min)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXGrJsMDSXM>

MEDITATIONS

Breathing with Leaf - Michael Kearney (24 minutes)
Forgiveness Meditation – Richard Groves

TO FURTHER ENRICH YOUR EXPERIENCE:

Poems:

The Guesthouse – Rumi

A Winter Blessing – The Circle of Life, Joyce Rupp, Macrina Wiederkehr

Articles:

The Four Things that Matter Most (Ira Byock, MD)

Part 1, The Four Things, Pages 2-33

Part 2, Forgiveness, Pages 36-49

The American Book of Living and Dying (Richard Groves and Henriette Ann Klauser):

Spiritual Pain, Pages 37-60

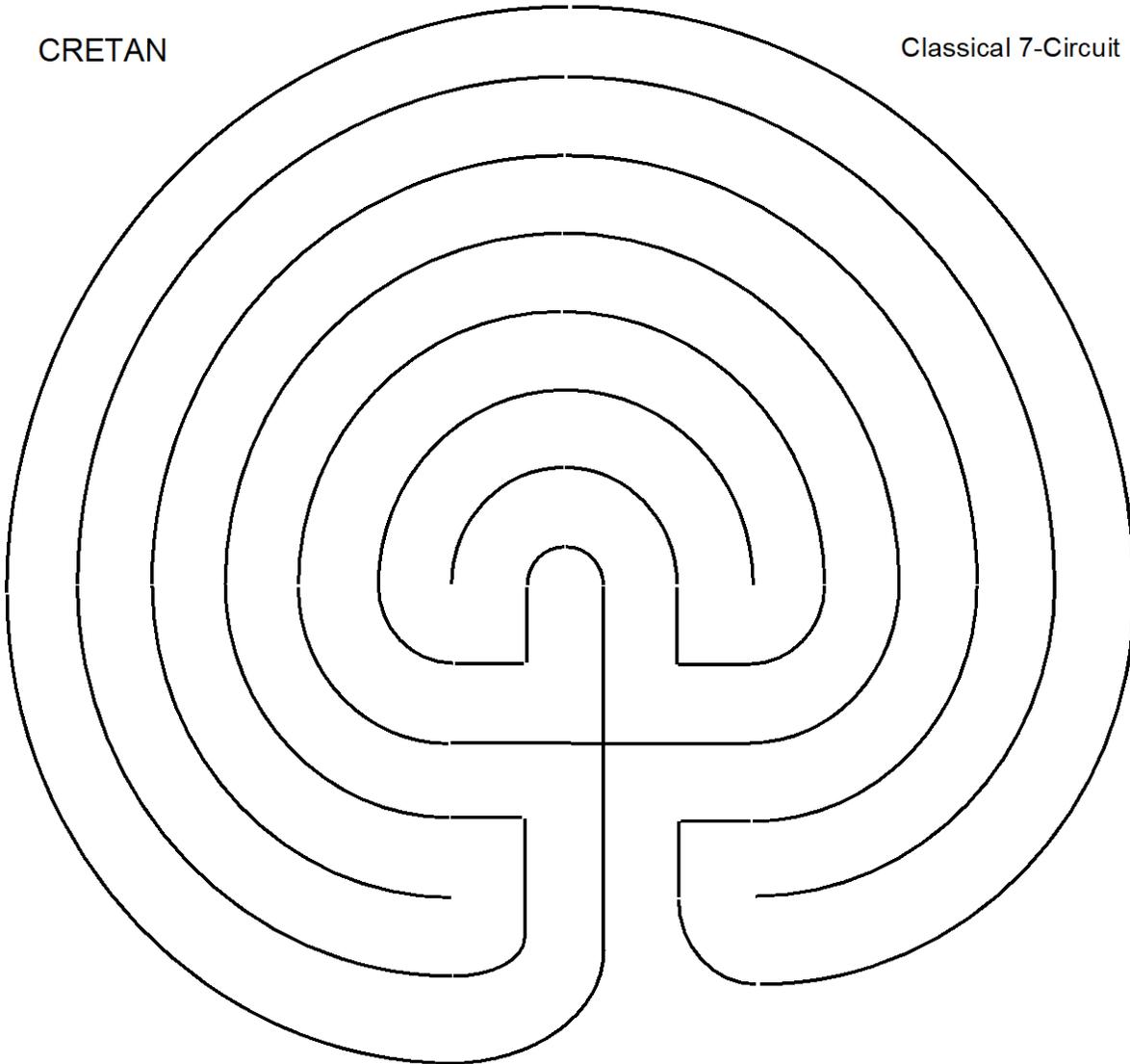
Forgiveness Exercises, Pages 227-230

Activities:

Finger Labyrinths

CRETAN

Classical 7-Circuit

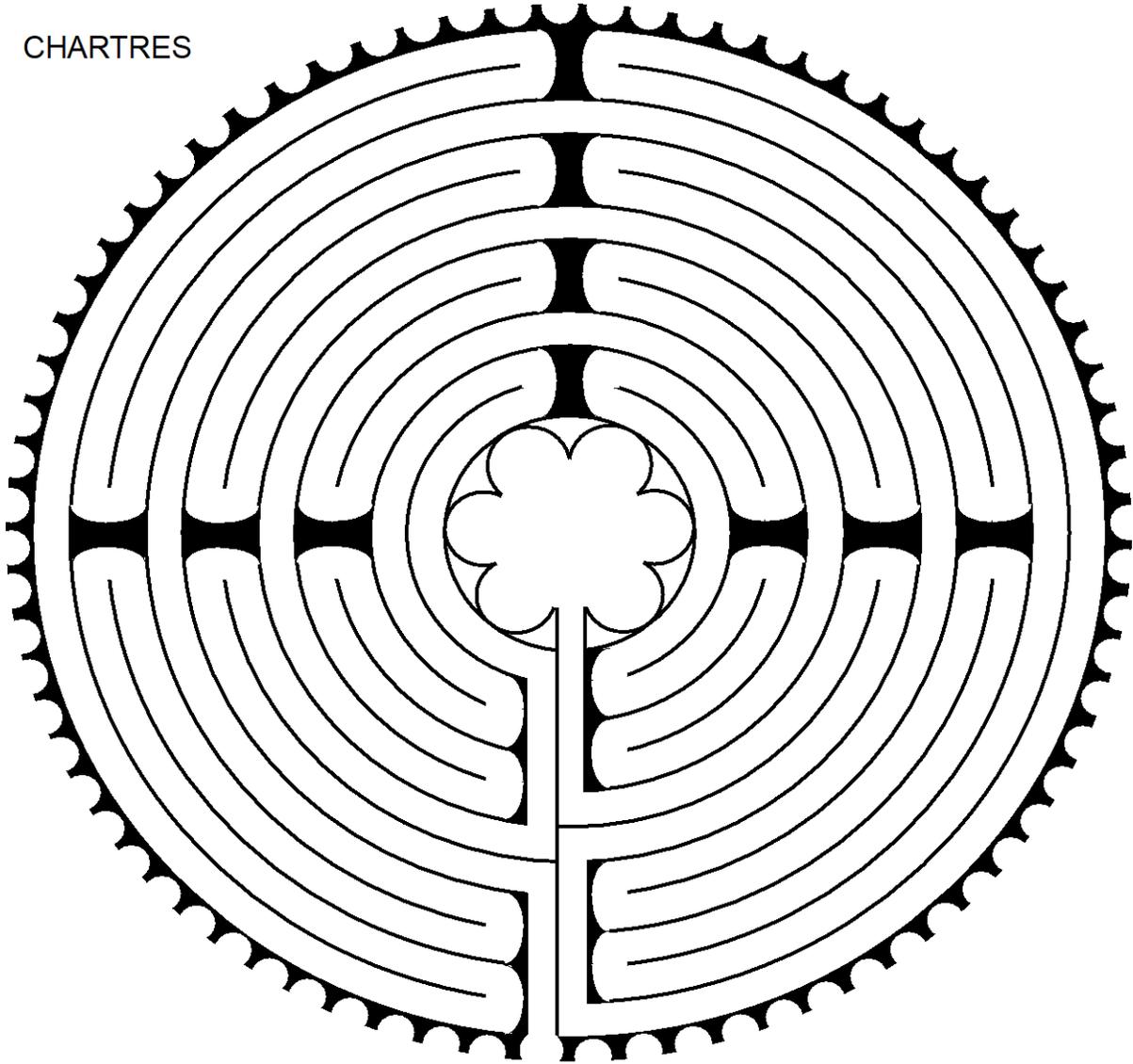


Color in the labyrinth above using crayons, colored pencils etc. Use as many colors as possible; this will make it easier for your eyes to follow your "walking" finger. Choose a walking finger and breathe smoothly. As you trace the path (from the outside opening at the bottom to the center, move at whatever pace feels right for you. As you do so, you may opt to:

- a. Quiet your mind
- b. Pray for yourself or someone else
- c. Keep a question in mind and feel the question using your emotions

At the center, pause and take several slow deep breathers (keeping your finger inside the center or place your hands comfortably on your lap). Here, many believe you are the closest to the center of your spirit and greater insight is available. When ready to leave the center, or feel satisfied (like after eating a good meal) retrace the path back out to the entrance (which now becomes the exit point). Upon leaving the labyrinth, be grateful and thankful for the opportunity to bring divine strength and insight back with you into your daily life.

CHARTRES



Color in the labyrinth above using crayons, colored pencils etc. Use as many colors as possible; this will make it easier for your eyes to follow your "walking" finger. Choose a walking finger and breathe smoothly. As you trace the path (from the outside opening at the bottom to the center, move at whatever pace feels right for you. As you do so, you may opt to:

- Quiet your mind
- Pray for yourself or someone else
- Keep a question in mind and feel the question using your emotions

At the center, pause and take several slow deep breathers (keeping your finger inside the center or place your hands comfortably on your lap). Here, many believe you are the closest to the center of your spirit and greater insight is available. When ready to leave the center, or feel satisfied (like after eating a good meal) retrace the path back out to the entrance (which now becomes the exit point). Upon leaving the labyrinth, be grateful and thankful for the opportunity to bring divine strength and insight back with you into your daily life.