

WETUMPKA IMPACT CRATER Discovery AND VISITOR CENTER



2 Rockstar Guide
policies, procedures and tour strategies

TYPE TO ENTER TEXT



1

The Wetumpka Impact Crater and the Cretaceous Period
An Integration of Visual Art, Paleontology and Geologic History
Docent Responsibilities:



1. Pre-education about the Wetumpka Impact Crater and the Cretaceous Period
2. Become familiar with the Power Point presentations and other information on the website (wetumpkacraterart.org) and in the Discovery Center & Alleyway.
 1. Wetumpka Crater
 2. Cretaceous Marine Life
 3. Cretaceous Dinosaurs
 4. Cretaceous Plant Life
 5. Impact Effects: Tsunami, Earthquake, Flash Fires
 6. Meteorites, Asteroids, Comets
 7. Inland Sea and Barrier Islands
 8. Fossils
 9. The Rise of Mammals
 10. Sedimentary Formations & Geology
 11. Flying Reptiles and Bird-Like Dinosaurs
 12. Cretaceous Insects
 13. Story Boards
 14. Self Guided Tour Booklet
 15. Discovery Center Videos
 16. Discovery Center Supplemental Material Package
3. Become familiar with the collection & artists work:
 - Karen Carr, New Mexico: paleoartist
 - Jerry Armstrong, Georgia: cosmic artist
 - Jonathon Hughes, Thailand: paleoartist
 - Asher Elbein, Texas: artist
 - Hope Brannon, Alabama: artist
 - Barry Chrietzberg, Alabama: photographer
 - Shirley Esco, Alabama: artist
 - Brooks Barrow, Alabama: sculptor
4. Read and Understand the Docent Handbook
5. Be prepared;
 - A. Create Your Docent Scripts
 - B. Conduct Impromptu Tours and Answer Questions for Visitors
 - C. Attend to and Engage with Visitors
 - D. Spread the Word: Upcoming Events & Lectures.
 - E. Conduct Scheduled Tours: Adults or Students
 - F. Short Docent Talk Featuring Specific Works in the Collection
 - G. Story Boards- include info in your tour
 - H. Engage Students through Museum Activities:
 - Studio Workshop: Hands-On Activities for School Age Students
(Small Groups - 45 minutes) - Visual Art Activity



Our Mission

Interweaving preservation, promotion and education about the Wetumpka impact event, resulting Crater and Cretaceous life of 85 million years ago; through programs and partnerships that engage, inspire and bring scientific research and knowledge to life.

Collection Rational

Our collection and exhibitions are designed to include original art and objects that illuminates science, geology and history related to the Wetumpka impact crater, and the story behind the object and discovery, artist and work. Exhibitions are also designed to promote local tourism and inspire creative industry. The Wetumpka Impact Crater Discovery Center champions excellence in the sciences and visual arts through exhibitions, collections and educational experiences.

Vision Statement

The Wetumpka Impact Crater Discovery Center, while promoting and educating about the Wetumpka Impact crater, strives to be recognized for leadership, innovation and excellence in the sciences, visual arts and natural history.

Education Mission Statement

The Education Department strives to make the Wetumpka Impact crater, our geologic and natural history, and related original objects and artwork accessible to a broad public through direct interaction with adults and students in and out of the classroom, teacher training, classes, lectures, online resources, publications, and innovative projects and partnerships designed to support public participation and engagement in the Discovery Center's educational activities and exhibitions.

Docent Mission Statement

Volunteer docents support The Wetumpka Impact Crater Discovery Center Education Department and education mission of the Discovery Center by participating in docent training and conducting interactive tours of original objects and works of art that highlight and support the scientific research of the Wetumpka impact crater and the natural history associated with the Cretaceous period as well as facilitating accompanying studio or field workshops to meet the tour goals and objectives stated in the docent scripts.

Docent Education Philosophy

Docents exemplify The Wetumpka Impact Crater Discovery Center education philosophy, which encourages the examination and discussion of our objects and art through a holistic approach to art education that encourages meaningful connections between the objects and artwork on display and the students' lives. The tour programs support the development of critical thinking skills, visual and scientific analysis, exploration and understanding of scientific and art techniques as well as the investigation of cultural contexts, art as a form of communication, and multidisciplinary connections. In its touring program, docents employ student-centered, guided-discovery techniques and inquiry strategies that encourage teaching directly from the object and encompass aspects of many education philosophies.



Docent Information

“Docent” comes from the Latin word “docere” meaning “to teach.” The Wetumpka Impact Crater Discovery Center Docents do this and more. Tours are an important aspect of the program, and Docents are expected to fulfill their commitment to the Docent Program through their participation in conducting tours.

Docents will have the opportunity to become acquainted with the exhibition, collection and fellow Docents. Orientation sessions and the Docent Training, offering aspects of art, science and natural history, studio and educational programs, and communication techniques, will prepare the Docent for giving tours.

Prior knowledge of science, art and the crater is not necessary; only an open mind, flexibility, interest, enthusiasm and time for sharing are required. Museum docents receive much self-satisfaction and enlightenment through this program since they are most often the first contact many children and adults have with the Wetumpka impact crater and related science, geology, visual arts, natural history and a museum setting.

We have prepared several documents, websites and links to articles and video that will prepare Docents; taking the guesswork out of it and putting the correct information right at your fingertips.

1. Docent Guide: Policies, Procedures and Strategies
2. Docent Handbook: Supplemental Materials
3. Wetumpka Impact Crater Commission History
4. How to See the Wetumpka Impact Crater: A Guide to the interpretive signage
5. Our Websites:
 1. wetumpkacraterart.org
 2. <http://www.wetumpkaimpactcratercommission.org/>
6. Web links of note about the Wetumpka impact crater
 1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wetumpka_crater
 2. <http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1035>
 3. <https://www.al.com/news/2021/11/84-million-years-ago-a-massive-meteorite-strikes-ancientalabama.html>
7. Filmography
 1. Wetumpka impact crater (1998). © Alabama Public Television; APT’s Discovering Alabama segment no. 31. 26 minutes, 28 seconds. Produced by Doug Phillips. Vimeo - <https://www.discoveringalabama.org/31wetumpka-impact-crater.html>



A Star Docent:

- ★ Exhibits enthusiasm for the Wetumpka Impact Crater, the Discovery Center and our collection of art and objects;
- ★ Exhibits an understanding of the information, research, art and objects associated with the Wetumpka Impact Crater and the Cretaceous period;
- ★ Teaches from the art or object itself;
- ★ Responds directly to visitors' interests, being a good listener;
- ★ Actively engages visitors with the artwork and objects on display;
- ★ Is understanding of and sensitive to visitors' abilities and needs for learning;
- ★ Models the visual and intellectual skills for expert consideration of our collection;
- ★ Offers opportunities for visitors to practice these skills;
- ★ Gives selective information, articulately, at appropriate levels of understanding;
- ★ Acts as facilitators for the Discovery Center experience and art/object encounters;
- ★ Behaves as a co-learner, being open to new insights from visitors;
- ★ Uses a variety of teaching techniques: asking questions, giving information, leading discussions, encouraging visitors to discover new meanings;
- ★ Practices fair group management and discipline when necessary;
- ★ Participates in all docent training so they can provide the highest quality tours and accurate information.



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safety of visitors must receive first priority.

Maximum Occupancy Capacity: 78

1. Be familiar with all exits shown on building map.
Emergency Exit Doors locations (see map for more specific locations):
 - Front door to outside
 - Back door to outside stairs
2. When a fire alarm sounds or there is fire or smoke:
Please exit the Museum in the most direct manner using the front door or an emergency exit door. Wait outside at least 30 feet from the Museum for more directions.
3. In the case of a power failure:
Escort your tour to the front of the building or outside.
Visitors may NOT remain in darkened areas, even with emergency lighting, for their own safety and the safety of the art and objects.
4. In the case of a tornado warning or severe weather event:
 - Bathroom
 - Kitchen
 - Office
5. In the case of an intruder or threatening person:
 - If the person is outside
 - If the person is inside
6. When a visitor appears ill or has had a physical accident in the Discovery Center or on the entrance walk: notify city staff immediately.



MUSEUM POLICIES:

Cell Phones

- Cell phones may not be used in the museum.
- Please ask visitors to silence their cell phones while in the museum and to go outside to make or take normal calls.

Photography Policy

- Photographs may not be taken in temporary exhibitions or permanent collection galleries because of copyright and other restrictions.
- Flash photography is not allowed.
- Tripods, digital cameras and video cameras are not allowed.

Food and Drinks

- Drinks and food, including baby bottles and cups (which babies can squirt and throw), must be checked or packed away, not taken into the galleries.

In Case A Person Or Group Is Unruly

No Touching Policy

The policy of not touching works of art must be established with your tour group before going into the galleries.

Backpack / Baby Carrier Policy

- Bags, waist-packs, purses carried on the back, and hand-bag style purses are allowed as long as they do not exceed the size limit of 11" x 15".
- In order to prevent damage to works of art on exhibition, the Museum does not allow oversize bags, backpacks or back-mounted baby carriers in the exhibition galleries.
- Visitors are requested to store their bags and backpacks in the security alcove. They will receive a package-check number for the items they check. Purse-size back-packs are allowed. Museum staff will keep valuable items in the closet if requested.
- Visitors with baby back-packs are requested to bring and use a stroller.

Our policy is based on the following recommendation from the American Association of Museums: The Museum Association Security Committee Guidelines recommend that museums “do not permit parcels of any type—purses, brief cases, shopping bags—larger than 11 by 15 inches in either dimension to be carried into the museum. Anything larger must be checked in the parcel room or left elsewhere. This enables museums to secure, by a variety of means, anything that is smaller than 11 x 15 inches in either dimension or which would fit into a bag that size. For example, an object small enough to leave the building in a small handbag would be secured under glass in a vitrine, alarmed, displayed behind a barrier, etc.”



EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

In support of our mission, education programs provide visitors with opportunities to have meaningful experiences with original art and objects in the collection. Programs complement and extend the learning that takes place naturally in the exhibit hall, advancing art/objects as an integral component of personal expression and the human learning experience.

Our education philosophy encourages the examination and discussion of the natural history, science and visual arts through a holistic approach to art education. Programs support the development of critical thinking skills, visual analysis, exploration and understanding of art techniques and scientific inquiry as well as the investigation of cultural contexts, art as a form of communication, and multidisciplinary connections.

In its touring program, the Wetumpka Impact Crater Discovery Center uses arts & scientific-based, student-centered, guided-discovery techniques and inquiry strategies that encourage teaching directly from the object and encompass aspects of many education philosophies.

Education Tour Goals:

1. That visitors have an enjoyable experience while visiting the museum and are encouraged to return;
2. That visitors leave the museum with an understanding of the basic tenets of the featured exhibition;
3. That students actively participate in the experience discussing the artwork using art vocabulary and making meaningful, personal connections;
4. That student discussion is associated with the information mailed to the teachers in the pre-tour packet;
5. That we teach directly from the object, asking questions and encouraging discussion. For student tours, whenever possible, at least one interactive, hands- on component will be used in the galleries. At least one compare/contrast discussion will also take place during the tour;
6. For workshop tours, that students experience a studio activity that reinforces the concepts and/or techniques discussed/viewed in the galleries resulting in a tangible, personally meaningful understanding of the artwork.



SCHOOL TOUR PROGRAMS

School Tour Program enhances accessibility to the museum and enables students – pre-kindergarten through high school – to visit. Guided tours and workshops allow students to experience a tangible dimension of learning.

Tours and workshops focus on experience-based active learning strategies that engage students in highly participatory tours led by museum-trained **The Discovery Center** docents. The tours encourage students to explore artwork from **The Discovery Center's** Permanent Collection and/or its changing exhibitions through hands-on activities and lively discussions.

School Tour Options

Gallery Tours

Offers guided tours highlighting its Permanent Collection and changing exhibitions tailored to specific age levels. Students concentrate on specific themes or ideas as they tour the museum. Educational activities, including gallery games and inquiry based learning techniques, engage students directly with works of art. Gallery tours last 60 minutes.

Workshop Tours

The Discovery Center offers several workshop tours each year, featuring changing exhibitions and the Permanent Collection. Students explore the artwork in the gallery and end their tour with a hands-on art experience in the Education Center Studio. Each workshop tour is adaptable for all ages. Workshop tours for pre- kindergarten through 1st grade last 30 minutes. Workshop tours for 2nd grade through high school last 60 minutes.

Field Tours

ADULT TOURS

Adult tours by appointment
monthly First Sunday Art Tours at 3 pm,
monthly Especially for Seniors tours at 2 pm, and
monthly Art Breaks at 12:15 pm.

TEACHER PRE-TOUR PHONE CALLS

The Teacher Confirmation Secretary calls the teacher to answer any questions the teacher may have and to discuss any concerns. Below are sample questions/topics to discuss or remind the teacher about.

1. Hello. I am calling from the Wetumpka Impact Crater Discovery Center to confirm a tour for (teacher's name). Is he/she available? May I leave him/her a message?
2. Have you looked at the pre-tour art pack?



3. Have you shared it with the students? (Please make sure you do share the printout with your students before your scheduled tour. Our tours are based on the understanding that the students will have that information prior to their visit. It helps us provide a more valuable educational experience for them.)

4. Do you have any questions about the information?

5. Do you have any questions about the tour?

6. Is there anything you are studying that fits well with this tour that you would like emphasized?

7. Remind the teacher that the 60/90 minute tour will be filled with our tour/workshop and that there will not be additional time for viewing/other activities.

8. Name tags are important – please use first names only and print clearly and with large letters. Please have the tags on the students when they arrive.

9. Please have the students divided into two groups.

10. Does your class have any special needs (students in wheelchairs, etc.)?

11. We will be concentrating on a few pieces that correspond to the tour learning objectives so we will be giving students free tickets to come back to the Museum.

12. Invite the teacher to preview the exhibition with their free pass before the students come for the tour if he/she would like.

13. Remind the teacher to bring students to the back Education Entrance and wait for their docent. Do not arrive more than 5 minutes early.

Remind the teacher that chaperons will be asked to assist during the tour and studio workshop (please ask them not to bring babies or other children). Remind the teacher that 4 chaperons per group are needed.

15. Remind the teacher that no photography, cell phones, backpacks or large bags are allowed in the galleries.

16. Students will be participating in an art making activity and will have artwork to carry back to school with them. Teachers may want to advise students to dress for mess.



GENERAL STUDENT TOUR OUTLINE FOR DOCENTS

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Know your audience. If they are children, keep yourself informed about some general current interests--favorite TV shows, music, heroes, etc.
- Know the works about which you will be talking and their locations; follow the theme and objectives outlined in the docent script as they are designed to correspond with the teacher pre-tour packet for student preparation and post- visit activities.
- Dialogue questions are carefully formulated in the script to meet the tour objectives and engage students.
- Prepare so that you can conduct the tour without notes if possible.
- Feel free to tailor the tour to your personality while still including the required/expected interactive components and objectives of the tour.
- Call the docent with whom you will be conducting the tour to confirm that s/he will be there and where s/he wishes to start their tour. This will prevent last minute jitters and assure that you will not have an entire school group to tour on your own.
- Understand the goals for the tour.
- Be clear about what you aim to accomplish.
- Try to help your group achieve the learning goals of your tour as established in the script.
- Ask yourself, “How can I accomplish the learning goals for this tour?”
- Teachers will receive educational materials in advance to help prepare the students for their programs. These materials are prepared so that they correspond with the docent script resulting in a comprehensive learning experience.
- Teachers are asked to be sure that everyone in the group is wearing a name tag so that you can call on students by their names. Refer to the exhibition pre-tour packet material mailed to the teacher. Know the goals and objectives as outlined in the packet and the script.

GETTING STARTED

- Plan your time so you can arrive at the Museum at least 15 minutes before your scheduled tour.
- Double check your tour route. Once in a while last-minute changes are made in the galleries, and we are unable to get the information to you in advance.
- Know where tour materials are stored.



MEETING YOUR GROUP

- Greet your group at the Education Entrance. Write down the number in their group on the sheet. # of students + # of chaperons
- Decide with other docents where you each want to begin if you did not already discuss in your advance phone call.
- Teachers should divide classes into groups of fifteen students.
- Take your group to your pre-determined starting point and go over your introductory comments there.
- Greet your group, relaxed and smiling. Introduce yourself and welcome them.

DISCUSS TOUR POLICIES WITH STUDENTS

Discuss the museum manners including the no-touching policy and how it affects them. If you are touring a group of children, go over any other items or points you would like your group to do, i.e., raise their hands if they have a question or wish to answer a question, always stay with their group, etc. Ask the teacher or chaperon to assist throughout the tour and in the studio workshop.

No Touching Policy

The policy of not touching works of art must be established with your tour group before going into the galleries.

Ways of Saying “Please Don’t Touch”

Works of art in the Museum need to be taken care of so that they can be seen and enjoyed by all visitors in the future. Touching damages art work.

How to communicate this idea to children:

*WHY DO YOU THINK YOU ARE ASKED NOT TO TOUCH CERTAIN THINGS...AT HOME, AT SCHOOL IN A STORE?

(You could be hurt--by a hot burner or sharp saw or electrical wiring. Or you might hurt something--objects can be broken, or dirtied or worn by people handling them too much.)

*FEEL YOUR FINGERTIPS. ARE THEY PERFECTLY DRY? DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT KEEPS OUR SKIN SOFT? (We have oil and moisture in our skin.)

*HAVE YOU EVER SEEN FINGERPRINTS? HAVE YOU SEEN FINGERPRINTS MADE BY CLEAN FINGERS? (Oily marks on a drinking glass, table top, mirror.)

*SOME OF THE WORKS OF ART IN THE MUSEUM ARE QUITE OLD, AND WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THEM--AND ALL THE WORKS HERE--FOR PEOPLE TO SEE IN THE FUTURE. WHAT DO YOU THINK GOOD PRECAUTIONS WOULD BE?

(temperature and humidity control...no touching...sometimes camera flashes can cause damage, so we control picture-taking, etc.)

Docents are responsible for making sure the students are maintaining a safe distance from the artwork at all times during the tour.



IN CASE A GROUP IS UNRULY

- We all want the museum visit to be an engaging, enjoyable and memorable learning experience for everyone concerned. We believe that a relaxed, friendly atmosphere, an open exchange of ideas and the chance to actively express reactions to works of art can enhance the experience.
- However, any activity that endangers the works of art, the children or anyone else in the galleries cannot be permitted. Obviously, running, jumping and pushing are not allowed, nor is touching any work in the museum.
- Be alert to your group at all times. Having the group sit on the floor to discuss each work discourages a lot of behavior problems and provides a better environment for group discussion. It is much easier to maintain control when everyone is seated.
- If the group does not settle down, ask the teacher for help. Separate any problem children and ask the chaperon to stay with them until their tour is finished.
- Always feel free to call on the help of security staff in the Museum.
- If it is not possible to contain the group with the help of teachers and chaperons, let the teacher know that you will have to ask them to leave the museum as you cannot facilitate a meaningful experience and protect the artwork under the circumstances. A security staff member can help you with this process.

DURING THE TOUR

- Have the students sit for discussions in the galleries.
- State the theme of the tour with a good introductory statement or statements that will spark the group's interest.
- Help the group feel relaxed--use open-ended dialogue questions with no right or wrong answers.
- Help the group make connections between objects and what they know or might have experienced. Refer to previously discussed works.
- Be a good and patient listener. Wait for and encourage the group's responses.
- Face the group members, not the work about which you are speaking.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Be friendly, enthusiastic, and flexible about what you are doing.
- Speak clearly, distinctly, slowly, at a volume that can be heard but not so loud as to disturb other groups.



- Vary your tone of voice to enliven the tour.
- Tailor your vocabulary to the level of your group. Use appropriate language/vocabulary. Define your terms--or omit them. Simplicity is the key.
- Keep gestures at a safe distance from the works. Do not touch the works. Do not point with a pen or pencil. Light pointers are available in the docent desk so that you may model a safe distance from the work for the students.
- Make sure everyone has a chance to see the work – sitting is best for this.
- Don't be too eager to tell all you know about an exhibition or object you are looking at-- you may inadvertently stifle an exciting thought. Always avoid lecturing. With children, don't be too quick to give the "right" answer. What may be "right" to you may not appear logically "right" to the student. With many questions under discussion, your comment is only one interpretation of the issue. Children's responses can be surprising, and it's best to have your approach follow rather than doggedly pursue a predetermined line of reasoning. With children, don't ask questions that require factual answers (unless it is a matter of common knowledge you are using as a springboard for a personal response).
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know." Offer to find out and follow-up on the question. If someone is knowledgeable about a certain area, let him/her add constructively to the tour. Feel free to turn the question back around to the questioner. For instance, the questioner asks "Why is this art? You may respond with something like, "Why do you think it is art?", or "Or do you think it should be considered art?", or "What do the rest of you think?"
- Be tactful but firm in dealing with discipline problems, i.e., group members that want to monopolize the tour, visitors that offer incorrect information, visitors that persist in sharing personal anecdotes irrelevant to the tour subject.

Guidelines for Tour Questioning Strategies

Questioning strategies are so valuable because they keep you from lecturing, they involve and engage the viewer with the artwork, they encourage discovery learning which is an active, rather than passive learning process (listening to a lecture is considered passive learning), and they provide opportunities for scaffolding student understanding. Active learning results in meaningful learning that causes memorable experiences. Let the artwork and your group's responses guide your questions. Not all questions are appropriate for every piece. Be selective. Come up with your own questions that directly relate to the artwork and to the viewers/participants. Student observations will lend themselves to sharing bits of interesting information here and there in between questions.

Start from simple questions and move to more complex questions. This will encourage reluctant participants by proving that they can answer the questions too. Also asking questions that do not have right or wrong answers helps the viewers be more comfortable with the work instead of feeling like they have to know a lot to be able to relate to the artwork. To help guide your questions, make sure the questions are applicable to the



specific artwork. Ask questions that might elicit a personal response that relate to the artwork but is grounded in the viewers' experiences rather than requiring an interpretation of the artwork. (In other words, have you ever done . . . , have you ever seen. . . , do you have . . .) Ask questions to which you do not know the answer, to which there are several possible answers, or to which you have an answer but do not know what someone else's response might be. Avoid too many questions to which the response is a simple, 'yes' or 'no.'

A good way to start is by having viewers list one thing they see. This slows the looking process. Then move to more analytical questions and questions that draw from the viewers' imaginations. Questions that relate to the viewers will help draw them into the artwork. Finally, questions relating to their judgement of the work should come last to give the viewer an opportunity to really look and relate to the artwork on a deeper level before they make a quick judgement about whether or not they 'like' the work. You should be able to tell rather quickly if your approach is working for the group so that you can adjust accordingly.

Sample Questions for Engaging the Viewer with a Work of Art

1. Who can name an object they see?
2. What kind of colors do you see?
3. Do you see any repeating patterns or shapes?
4. What is the weather like?
5. What kind of day is it?
6. Does this remind you of anyone you know/any place you've been?
7. Imagine the place this object was made or used.
8. What people are around? What are they doing?
9. What kind of buildings do you see? What kind of plants?
10. If you were to step into this place, what would you hear, smell?
11. Can you tell anything about the artist by looking at his/her work?
12. What object in your culture serves a similar purpose? What object in your culture has a similar appearance?
13. Can you tell just by looking what medium the artist has used?
14. What else could the artist have used to communicate the same idea?
15. Why would that medium be a good choice?
16. How is this piece similar to the one beside it/the one we just looked at?
17. How is this piece different from the one beside it/the one we just looked at?
18. Would you dress like this to go to a party/go to the beach, etc.
19. Do you have a cat/dog, etc. (relating to the piece)?
20. If you weren't able to talk, hear or write, how would you communicate?
21. Have you ever carved wood or painted a painting? Was it easy/difficult?
22. If the artist were here, what questions would you ask him/her?
23. Why do you think the museum would think it was important to display this work for people to see?
24. If you were to select one of the landscapes to step into, which would you most like to be a part of?
25. If you were to select one piece from those we have talked about, which would you like to have hanging in your home? Why? Which room would you hang it in?

26. Just a side note: you may want to carefully consider the question, “How make you feel?” Some viewers, young and old, may find it difficult to talk their feelings. In a group setting, it may be too much to expect a viewer to confess, “It makes me sad, angry, etc.” A question that might feel safer to the viewer is, “What kind of mood does this painting portray and why?” This question removes the feelings from the viewer and places them on the object.



CONCLUDING YOUR TOUR

- At the conclusion of the tour, summarize what has been seen and learned, or help the group to do it for themselves.
- With children, gather the group to talk a little about what they liked or didn't like. What would they tell a friend or a parent about the visit? How did what they experienced here compare with what they expected?
- Praise the group for their thoughtful questions, their interest and their participation.
- Tell the group you enjoyed showing them the Museum.
- Encourage them to come back.



TOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (ages 3-6)

A positive way to begin for any group is to introduce the theme of your tour. Relate what you say to the experience of the visitors. Be prepared to learn from the visitors. If they ask questions not directly related to your tour theme, that's okay. Follow their interests.

Children between the ages of 3 and 6 may talk excessively or loudly, interrupt frequently and ask many questions. They have intense curiosity and thirst for knowledge. They can understand the Museum's rules. Tours need to be flexible and sometimes shorter than planned. Young children tire easily and sometimes have shorter attention spans. A tired child learns little of value. Some of the following suggestions may be helpful.

Explain the rule about not touching objects; set a good example by keeping your own distance from them.

Allow the teacher or chaperon to deal with an individual child's problems.

Seat children in the galleries.

It is helpful to maintain eye contact with the group. If children are seated, try to sit with them.

Talk with the children rather than "down" to them.

Asking good questions is a most helpful technique to encourage group participation.

Show pleasure when a child asks or answers a question or makes an observation.

Encourage using their imaginations by such questions as "Let's put on our pretending glasses and go on a _____ hunt." (examples: animal hunt, flower hunt, painting hunt, etc.)

Stimulate as many senses as possible: "What do you hear?, What do you smell?, How would it feel or taste?"

Younger students enjoy finding out about the "story" behind the work. Use this as a time to sharpen your story-telling skills.

Help make the paintings real by having the students name as many familiar objects as possible and by using words familiar to children: Point out foods, shapes, colors, etc. Ask who has eaten or seen these things. Ask children to use pretend brushes and paint lines and shapes in the air. Suggest: "Let's be 'copy cats' and pose like _____." (a person or object in the painting)

As soon as you see children losing interest, move to the next object. Let their interest help determine the time spent on each object. Attention spans will vary greatly with each group.

Use a basket with touchable objects to explain themes or ideas you want to communicate. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Let each child know how very pleased we are to have them in the Museum. Encourage them to return soon, bringing family and friends so that they can explain to the others what they have learned. It is so important for each child to feel completely welcome during this initial visit.



TOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN (ages 6-12)

A positive way to begin for any group is to introduce the theme of your tour. Relate what you say to the experience of the visitors. Be prepared to learn from the visitors. If they ask questions not directly related to your tour theme, that's okay. Follow their interests

The years between first and sixth grades span ages when children are changing rapidly. Teaching methods for the early primary grade child are different from those that are effective with fifth and sixth graders. The following suggestions are generally applicable for all.

Be enthusiastic! It's infectious with these ages and keeps the children's attention.

Watch your vocabulary. Be certain they understand what you mean. Avoid talking "down" to them, however, as they are very sensitive to this error.

Be alert to their personal needs, but do not allow the entire tour time to be consumed at the water fountain or in the rest rooms.

Keep the group together. Once you allow wandering, you lose the group.

It is best to sit the group on the floor to talk to them.

Establish your rules of behavior and expectations from the children. For example, tell them you will ask them to raise their hands for questions or comments. They like to know the limits; it saves them from testing you to see what they can and cannot do in the Museum.

Always involve the children in your presentation; never just lecture:

Through questions you can easily initiate a discussion;

Listen carefully to their comments for clues to their interests;

Occasionally, stand back and be a viewer with them;

Invite them to act out the line, motion, or feelings expressed in the work of art;

Use gallery games, stories and touchable objects to explain ideas.

Relate the piece to their world as much as possible:

Start with simple questions and move to more complex questions. This will encourage reluctant participants that they are capable of answering questions too.

Ask questions that require a personal response that relates to the artwork but is grounded in the students' experiences rather than requiring a formal interpretation of the artwork. In other words, "Have you ever done. . . Have you ever seen. . . Do you have. . . How would you have done. . ."

Include points that tie in with their classroom studies if possible.

Be cautious about spending too much time on one work of art. Fidgeting is a good indicator that



TOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR TEENAGERS

A positive way to begin for any group is to introduce the theme of your tour. Relate what you say to the experience of the visitors. Be prepared to learn from the visitors. If they ask questions not directly related to your tour theme, that's okay. Follow their interests

Teenagers tend to worry about being embarrassed in front of their peers by saying the “wrong thing.” Often it is this kind of insecurity that makes them act in a blasé, uncooperative or disruptive manner. To put them at ease and to help them feel that it is “acceptable” for them to have an enjoyable experience in the Museum, your attitude toward the students as persons is all important. Teens are disdainful of behavior that is perceived as false or insincere. They are concerned with self-identify and acceptance within a peer group. They do not want to be singled out. They want to be respected as mature individuals. The following rather emphatic suggestions have proven valid:

Treat teenagers as adults; never talk “down” to them or single them out.

Be good-humored with the group, but not facetious. Never use sarcasm, sharp comments or to personal remarks that may be misinterpreted. Also, unless you are entirely at ease with current teenage jargon, it would be better not to interject it into your presentation as though it were part of your own language pattern. In most cases, it doesn't fit.

Try not to create a classroom or “quiz session” atmosphere by asking students for historical facts such as “Who fought the Battle of Actium?” Rather, review any needed information with them, reminding them of facts as though you assume they already know them by leading with “As you know. . .”. They may then volunteer further detail or observation or questions that will enhance the group's understanding of the work being discussed.

Invite students to make observations and to voice opinions. They are usually less hesitant to do so if you have reassured them that such expressions are not being graded as “right” or “wrong.” Your questions, which have been carefully formulated not to require right or wrong responses will successfully encourage participation.

Guide students in developing their powers of observation. For example, note styles of clothing, hairdo, jewelry, etc. that have changed over the years. Consider the impact of discoveries, inventions, and social changes that brought about the differences. These considerations lead to understanding the times that produced the works of art. Discuss the content and context of the images.

Make the artwork meaningful to the students by drawing them into it with your questions.



TOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR ADULTS

A positive way to begin for any group is to introduce the theme of your tour. Relate what you say to the experience of the visitors. Be prepared to learn from the visitors. If they ask questions not directly related to your tour theme, that's okay. Follow their interests

Experience has shown that most adults visiting the Museum for the first time appreciate and profit from having the layout of the Museum and contents of the various galleries explained to them in a logical sequence as one gallery leads to another.

Select one or two highlights from each gallery for detailed examination. Brief glimpses of other related pieces will reinforce the fact that this one is only a highlight. Most adults have had relatively little experience in Museum visits with guides or docents. Realizing this fact, you should not make the mistake of either: flaunting your more detailed or technical knowledge;

talking "down" to the visitor. One way to present basic information that seems elementary but that is essential to a good museum experience is to use the age-old ploy of beginning, "I'm sure you know this already, but..." Other palatable phrases: "We were interested to learn that..." or "Researchers have turned up the fact..."

There is always the possibility that the visitor has useful information that you would like to hear. If comments made by the visitor are known by you to be misinformation, you should resume control of the conversation and give the correct information as tactfully as possible or indicate that more than one opinion exists on the subject.

As a docent, you must at all costs avoid giving misinformation. If you don't know, say so.

Draw adults into the conversation by stating related information with a preface such as, "I'm sure many of you are familiar with . . . lived through. . . remember where you were when. . ."

Starting with a question that asks for a show of hands is a nice way to ease adults into participating.



TOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

A positive way to begin for any group is to introduce the theme of your tour. Relate what you say to the experience of the visitors. Be prepared to learn from the visitors. If they ask questions not directly related to your tour theme, that's okay. Follow their interests

For certain groups of adults who admit to belonging to this arbitrarily named group (for 62+) you may need to make some modifications on the suggestions in the preceding "Adults" section. In general, the ideas therein are applicable here, but the following additional ones may also be of assistance:

Advise the group of the planned length of the tour and ask if anyone needs a shorter or longer time, depending on their physical stamina and/or their other activities before or after the Museum visit. Offer the camp stools (stored in the coat closet) for those who would like to be seated. Folding chairs may also be requested from the security staff if necessary.

Determine whether any physical disabilities or special needs require attention.

Make up your mind to lead the group slowly enough for all to proceed from gallery to gallery at a comfortable pace. See that all are assembled in the gallery before you begin to talk.

Speak slowly, distinctly, and perhaps more loudly than you might with younger groups. It is doubly tiring for an older visitor to have to strain to hear as well as to see.

Draw them into tour-talk by asking questions about their memories, experiences and perhaps travel. Recalling these can help them identify with some of the subject matter of works they see. Their personal associations sometimes lead to discoveries of interesting details.

Try not to be discouraged by the fact that some groups show little or no interest in the tour. They are undoubtedly absorbing more than can be seen.

Table of Contents

