



Activities to Prepare for Museum Mile

Dear Parents and Educators:

Preparing your child/student for their museum visit is important because it will help them be ready for all the exciting things that they will see and do on their cultural adventure.

Ask: WHAT IS A MUSEUM?

Have your child guess what a museum is. You might prompt him or her by recalling a visit you have made to a place similar to a museum. *A museum is a place that has exhibitions (displays of objects) that the public can visit. Museums take care of the objects, so that many people can enjoy them for years to come.*

Ask: WHAT TYPES OF MUSEUMS ARE THERE?

Museums come in all shapes and sizes. They can be modern or old buildings. They can be old ships, villages, farms or houses. Museums can teach about the past, present or future. If you can, go on the Internet and type in the word "museums" and see how many different types of museums there are.

Ask: WHAT KINDS OF THINGS CAN YOU SEE IN A MUSEUM?

Well just about anything can be exhibited in museums. There's much more than just art. Some museums display old books or coins, planes, dinosaur bones and dead insects, live plants, live animals and, wow, even materials from outer space. There are also museums made just for kids!

Ask: WHAT IS AN "EXHIBITION"?

An exhibition or exhibit is a collection of objects that are brought together to be seen as a group. They may be related to a theme, a time-period or idea, or teach you something new. For example, maybe the exhibit is about frogs, ancient Egypt, or New York.

CREATE YOUR OWN EXHIBITION!

Tell your child that you are going to create an exhibition together. An example might be a collection of things that **"Make You Happy"** (for example it could include: teddy bears, dolls, family photos, grandma's chocolate chip cookie recipe and a pair of roller skates). Below are a few other ideas that you can use:

- **"Our Family"** may include family photos, special objects, or recipes
- **"Favorite Foods"** it may include actual fruits, recipes, or advertising cut-outs

Decide together how you will display your collection.

1. Where will you put up the show? You could even use a table or a bookshelf.
2. How will you arrange the objects?
3. What name will you give your exhibition?

Have your child take a friend and/or family member through his or her exhibition, explaining what the show is all about and what the items mean.

Finally, MAKE THE CONNECTION!

Remember to share that you will soon be going to a museum together, telling them when and what to expect to do and see. Remember that because the objects are very special and some are fragile, we can only touch them with our eyes, not our *hands*.



Ask: WHAT IS A COLLECTION?

A collection is several things grouped together as one. For example, a record or stamp collection, a comic book collection, or a collection of paintings.

Ask: WHAT DO YOU COLLECT?

What do you like to gather many of? Young children often collect a type of toy, sticks, leaves, baseball cards, etc.

Ask: HOW DO YOU SORT YOUR COLLECTION?

People that work in a museum have the job of sorting their collections in ways that help people understand them better. For example, in an aquarium, they might put all of the fish in one area, and all of the turtles in another.

MY COLLECTIONS, YOUR COLLECTIONS

Looking, Sharing, Counting, and Sorting

Bring together a collection of objects, it need not be fancy (postcards, buttons, stamps, shells, leaves, photographs, children's books) and have children sort it in one of these ways: (and then try again using another category for sorting!)

1. Sort by color
2. Sort by texture—smooth, rough, soft, hard
3. Sort by shape
4. Sort by size—small, medium, or large
5. Where will you put up the show

Count the number of items in the collection, and in the smaller collections.

MUSEUM MILE *IN MOTION*

A Movement Activity

Take an imaginary trip to 5th Avenue, a long street in Manhattan, with many museums. Have your child act out these movements like "Follow the Leader":



- **March in place.** Let's walk on the sidewalk, up the street to the first museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Met). I see many people climbing up a big staircase outside of the Met.
- **Climb the steps!** We're climbing the many steps outside of the Met. Whew, there are a lot. Let's rest. **Sit down.** Whew. **Take a deep breath. Continue climbing!** We're finally at the top of the stairs.
- **Open the door. Take off our coats.** Let's take off our coats and bags and give them to the nice people that will put them in the closet for us.
- **Look left! Look right!** Art from around the world is all around us. Let's practice looking: **Look up! Look down! Look all around!** (repeat)
- I see a very, very old temple from Egypt. **Let's "walk like an Egyptian."**

Other suggestions:

- **Spin in a circle!** After walking the spiral ramp of the Guggenheim, I'm dizzy!
- Ask children what they think they will see in the museums.
- Pretend to hold a paintbrush and **paint like an artist.**
- Pretend to **hold still—frozen like a sculpture or a statue.**
- **Peer into the dollhouse** at the Museum of the City of New York. Look at the mini-furniture!

Continue with your own ideas!

PEER INTO A MILE OF TREASURES
Activity Guides to Looking at Art from 5 Museums on the Mile
www.coolculture.org/activities/museum-mile