

## Procedures for Giving a Tour

### Tour Scheduling

The Tour Coordinators (612-870-3140) schedule all public, private, and self-guided group tours (except tours of exhibitions that have an admission charge, which are scheduled by the Department of Visitor and Member Services sales and service representatives). They maintain a centralized scheduling system and monitor the number and size of groups in the galleries to insure comfort and space needed for a positive experience.

### Tour Assignments

Each year you volunteer, you will be asked to submit a Tour Questionnaire specifying which days and times are preferable for giving tours and/or facilitating the Art Cart. The tour coordinators will use the information provided to establish a monthly calendar of Collection in Focus offerings for the general public.

### Types of Volunteer Assignments

- Public Tours: Regularly scheduled, hour-long, drop-in/drop-out guided tours for the general public. These tours begin at the tour kiosk by the Info Bar, unless otherwise specified.
- Private Tours: Hour-long tours by advance reservation only for groups of 10 or more of all ages. Reservations for these tours typically require 4 weeks advance notice.
- Art Carts: Hands-on learning stations available on a drop-in basis. Art Carts are scheduled/assigned to guides in 2-hour blocks.
- Stationed Guides: (Ask Me about the Art): Stationary guide-led informal gallery discussions. Occasionally scheduled by request for corporate events, special exhibition openings, Family Days, Third Thursdays, etc. (length of shift varies depending on the event/audience)
- Gallery Conversations: 20- to 30-minute, guide-facilitated conversations that meet in the gallery or special exhibition they are scheduled to address.

### Tour Days

Based on the questionnaire, each guide will be assigned a “tour day” (Thursday evening, Saturday, or Sunday). Guides will be assigned tours and Art Cart shifts only on their tour day, unless permission is given to make an assignment on another day of the week. If you are a Thursday evening guide (or any other day), it does not mean you will be assigned tours/Art Cart EVERY Thursday; however, you will not be assigned shifts on other days of the week.

### Tour Confirmations

When you are assigned a tour or Art Cart, you will receive a tour confirmation form by email for each assignment (tour, Art Cart, etc.) four weeks before the date of the assignment.

The confirmation form will give you the following information:

- name of the group/organization (private tours)
- date and time of the tour
- grade or age level (private tours)
- the number of people (private tours)
- subject of the tour
- names and contact information of assigned guides (including lead guide, if appropriate)
- contact person, phone numbers, and the best time to call (private tours)
- special information or requests

### Substitutes

If you are unable to give an assigned tour, **it is your responsibility to find a substitute**. Three “no shows” are grounds for dismissal. **It is your responsibility to let the Tour Office and the lead guide know of the change**. Please have the tour reservation number printed toward the top of the confirmation form available when you call.

### Emergency Absences

If an unforeseen emergency (i.e. sudden illness, car trouble) arises on the day of your assignment and you are running late or are unable to make your assignment, **please call the Visitor and Member Center at 612-870-3000 as soon as possible**. If possible, please also leave a message with the Tour Office at 612-870-3140. However, the Tour Office is not staffed on Thursday evenings and weekends, so it is most important you call the Visitor and Member Center.

### Checking Out

To avoid being scheduled for a tour when you know in advance you are unable to guide due to travel plans, work commitments, etc., please advise the tour office in writing by way of email at least four weeks plus one day in advance to Paula Warn [pwarn@artsmia.org](mailto:pwarn@artsmia.org) or Jennifer Curry [jcurry@artsmia.org](mailto:jcurry@artsmia.org). If you have travel plans, please allow yourself plenty of time to return/recover from your trip before being assigned tours.

### Arranging Private Tours

Please invite your friends, colleagues, book groups, etc., to the museum for private tours of the permanent collection! However, please remember that all privately arranged tours of the permanent collection or free special exhibitions should be arranged through the Tour Office (612-870-3140).

If you are aware that a certain group wishes to have **you** lead their tour, let the Tour Office know that when you or another representative of the group makes the reservation for the tour.

## Tour Day Checklist and Guidelines for Public Tours

### Arrival

1. Before coming to the museum, check the weekly events schedule posted at [www.mgpvolunteers.org](http://www.mgpvolunteers.org) (Calendars) for other tours scheduled to be in the galleries during your tour. (It's also posted as a hard copy on the bulletin board in the Tour Office.)
2. Arrive *at least* 20 minutes before the tour is scheduled to begin. Wear your security badge while in the building.
3. Check in immediately with staff at the Visitor and Member Services (VMS) Info Bar in the inner lobby Thursday evenings and weekends near the Museum Shop (or the Tour Office on weekdays).
4. Walk your tour route. Note gallery changes, removal of objects, etc.
5. All public tours of the permanent collection begin at the tour kiosk and Info Bar in the General Mills Lobby (inner lobby). Be at the kiosk at least 5 minutes before the start of your tour.
6. The VMS staff will make an announcement over the P.A. system approximately 5 minutes before the tour is scheduled to begin. This is also a good opportunity to let the Information Desk know where in the gallery you are planning to begin the tour, so that latecomers can join you.
7. Until the appointed start time for the tour, circulate among visitors in the lobby, checking to see if they are awaiting the tour and/or inviting them to join the tour. A proactive approach (and a warm smile) can go a long way toward garnering takers for your tour.
8. Begin the tour on time!
9. If you have no "takers" for the tour, wait 5-10 minutes after the scheduled time of the tour and see if one develops. If not, move into the galleries and let visitors there know you are available to lead a tour or to answer questions and discuss the art more informally.
10. Although each public tour has an assigned topic, it may be modified at the discretion of the guide to suit the needs of the group. Accommodate the wishes of your audience as far as it is possible. If they ask for something that is not within the range of your knowledge, do not be embarrassed to say so. No one can be expected to know everything.

11. Visitors on public should tours feel free to step in and out of tours when they wish to do so. Do not feel insulted if someone leaves your tour. It happens to everyone! You might announce at the beginning that they have this option.
12. Keep tabs on the time and wrap up at one hour. Of course, if your schedule permits, you can offer to stick around after the tour to visit, answer questions, etc.
13. **After the tour, return to the Tour Office bulletin board to record your name and the number of people on the tour.** This is important for statistics as well as to ensure that you receive tour credit.

Always keep in mind that your main objective is to make our visitors' experience of the museum as pleasant, comfortable, and informative as possible. Take a deep breath, relax, and enjoy your tours!

## Format for Public Tours

### Introduction

1. After the tour is announced, let those waiting at the Info Bar and Tour Kiosk know you will be leading the tour. Once the group has gathered and you are ready, begin with your general introduction.
  - A. Introduce yourself and welcome the group to the museum. Ask questions to aid you in assessing your audience (e.g., “Have you been to the MIA before?”)
  - B. In a brief and friendly manner, tell them what to expect on the tour. How long will it last? (About 1 hour) What is the tour topic/title? (e.g., Contemporary World Art) What is your style/format? (conversational, etc.)
  - C. Remind visitors of all ages not to touch the artworks and that food and drink are not allowed in the galleries. If there are small children, you may also need to remind them in a friendly manner not to run in the museum and to stay with the group.
2. Introduce your theme (i.e., Mixing It Up: the cultural exchange of ideas in art ) and explain what you mean by it (What’s the “take home” message?). You may choose to elaborate on your theme at this point or wait until you are upstairs in the galleries – perhaps near your first object or near a map or other useful didactic panel. You are welcome to incorporate the contextual images found on the iPads in the Tour Office, or use your own tablet, when you feel comfortable doing so.

### The Tour

3. As you discuss an object, stand to one side facing the group. **Be certain to maintain a one-foot distance between the objects and yourself (ask your group to do the same).** If a Security Guard observes you gesturing or standing too close to the art s/he may give you a non-verbal signal to move away by holding two hands out in front of themselves about 12” apart. If you do not see or heed this warning, s/he may politely give you a verbal warning that you are too close.
4. Consider the visitors’ comfort, and whenever possible, plan your tour route so that there are benches in proximity to one or more objects. Gallery stools are available for use in the Gallery 110 corridor on the first floor, should you wish to use them with visitors. Wheel Chairs are available at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue lobby entrance in the coat check. Visitor Member Service (VMS) staff can assist you. Assisted Listening Devices are also available through VMS.
5. Refer to the inquiry and VTS sections on the MGP website for ways to involve your group in a conversation about the art.
6. Use well-planned transitions to move your group from one object to the next.
7. Confine your tour to one hour unless other arrangements have been made.

8. Be flexible. **Expect** that occasionally you will be unable to use the object you want. Have a back-up plan! Use an unexpected change in plans as an opportunity for you and your group to explore and discover together.
9. Be considerate of your fellow museum guides. If you notice that a guide is waiting for the object you are discussing, try to move on as quickly as possible. If you are the guide who is waiting, quietly indicate by voice or hand signal that you will be back shortly. Remember Art Adventure Guides have priority at art works in their sets (A list of the Art Adventure objects can be found on the MGP website under Art Adventure Guides. Art Adventure tours happen during the weekday during school hours, so you will rarely conflict.).
10. Remember that sound echoes in the galleries. Moderate your voice accordingly.

### **Conclusion**

11. At the end of your tour:
  - A. Summarize key ideas and discussion points and/or ask the group to share their favorite object from the tour.
  - B. Thank the group for coming and encourage them to come back again.
  - C. Direct the group to other areas of the museum or leave them to continue their exploration of the gallery you toured.
  - D. Return to the Tour Office and record the number of visitors on your tour.