

Tips for Family Visits to the Stark Museum of Art

Visiting an art museum is a wonderful way to introduce children to visual art and cultural history while creating a rewarding experience for the entire family. Even very young viewers can make insightful interpretations when encouraged to discuss what they see. Repeat visits to art museums build a child's visual literacy, understanding of art processes, and familiarity with master works. Parents do not need specialized knowledge about art, but a little advance planning will make a family visit to the art museum more enjoyable.

Before Your Visit

Plan to spend twenty minutes to an hour at the museum, depending on children's ages. A shorter, more focused visit is often best. Pick one or two galleries to investigate. The Stark Museum of Art is free, so come back another day to see the rest.

Read a story about museums, such as *You Can't Take a Balloon into the Museum of Fine Arts* by Jacqueline Preiss Weitzman and Robin Glasser (available at the Stark Museum of Art Store, or consult your local public library).

Review museum manners with children:

Can you touch? Please "touch" the art with your eyes, not with your hands, except at education areas where you may touch, play, and create. Please also remember to stand back from the art and not get too close.

Can you run? Please only walk inside the museum

Can you talk loud or sing? Please talk, laugh, and share your feelings, but use a soft voice.

Can you eat or drink? No, you may not bring food or drink into the museum.

Would you like to write or draw? Please only use pencils; no pens, markers, or crayons.

During Your Visit

At the museum, use simple, open-ended questions when discussing art with children. *What do you see in this painting? How was this work of art made? What else is going on here?*

Try a game that involves the whole family. Pretend you are a team of art detectives. Look for clues in the works of art. Or, become actors and take on the roles of the figures in a painting. *How would these people move? What would they say?* Act out the next scene in the picture's story.

With very young children, play simple seek and find games in the museum. Look for colors, shapes and patterns in the artwork. Or, count the animals you find in the galleries.

Use the *Family Guide* located in the galleries to discuss art with older children. The cards give background and ask interpretive questions about selected works of art. The Family Guide is designed for upper elementary and middle-school children.

The Stark Museum of Art offers hands-on activities for children throughout the museum. Try the magnet boards, paper weaving, and drawing projects.

Take a break by visiting Stark Park, across the street from the Museum.

After Your Visit

Create your own masterpiece inspired by the works viewed on your visit to the Stark Museum of Art.

Check out the Stark Museum of Art website for information on Family Days, when children and parents can come to the museum for special tours, art making, scavenger hunts, and more!

Learn more about the artists and the subjects they portrayed by reading books such as *Yellowstone Moran* by Lita Judge and *The Life and Work of Frederic Remington* by Ernestine Giesecke. (Available at the Stark Museum of Art Store or consult your local public library.)