

Guidelines for Presenting in the Classroom

Plan your presentation:

- **Meet with the teacher to plan your presentations at the beginning of the year.** Ask what is studied in the classroom, and see if you can connect it with an art print. Use the Adventures in Art curriculum materials, if desired.
- **Plan your presentation to fit within the time allotted by the teacher:** Use the teacher as a resource to help decide what is realistic to do in the time allowed. Arrange ahead of time for display space to leave the print up in the classroom for display if possible.
- **Research the print you are presenting** so you know something about the work and the artist before you present it. There are resources in the reference section of the docent handbook to help you find the background information you need.
- **If you are doing an art activity as part of your presentation, coordinate with the teacher ahead of time to have the materials ready.** Make sure the activity is reinforcing some of the skills and knowledge presented through the print.

Present the Information:

- **Make sure everyone can see and hear well.** Have the kids move up and sit on the floor around the print if necessary.
- **Introduce yourself** and be enthusiastic! Maintain eye contact with your audience throughout the presentation.
- **Provide information about the artwork that is interesting for young children.** Rather than facts about the artist, focus on anecdotal stories or tidbits about the artist's life or technique/style. If you can, bring props or things that help illustrate something about the work, such as artist's tools, clothing or music of the period, pictures or slides.

- **Select some art words or concepts that are related to the print, and use them in your presentation.** If you leave the print on display in the classroom, print the art words that are related to it and leave them on display, also.
- **Your job is to help kids find “a way in” to the artwork.** Let the children discover the work by asking open-ended questions. The children will interpret it through the questions you ask and the information you give them. You shouldn't be the one doing all the talking.
- **If you do not know something, say so.** Allow the children to formulate their own answers to questions that arise.
- **Try to avoid telling a child their answer is wrong.** Everyone sees art through a different lens. Encourage them to share their observations, and emphasize that everyone's feelings and thoughts are important. A useful phrase is “Well, I never thought of it that way!”
- **The teacher will stay in the classroom during your presentation.** For the sake of consistency, allow them to handle any discipline problems that may arise.

Wrap it up:

- **When the presentation is over, compliment and give recognition to the children** for their behavior/ observations, and/or work, as appropriate. Let the children know that you enjoyed your visit to the classroom, and are looking forward to coming back.
- **Help the teacher with classroom clean-up** , if appropriate.
- **Hang the art print in the classroom**, if possible, along with any art vocabulary words you may have presented. If a related art activity was done, display student work, as space permits.
- **Thank the teacher** for their help and cooperation.

Keep your sense of humor, relax and enjoy yourself!

