

Tips for Engaging the Students in Discussion

Be sure everyone is able to see the reproduction. Talk with the classroom teacher about whether or not the group will be sitting on the floor or remaining at their desks. Try for a setup that will get the students as close to the reproduction as possible. Keep the students' eyes on you, too, by making regular eye contact throughout the group.

Establish a climate where students can listen to what each child has to say. It is very difficult to listen to more than one person at the same time. Let the kids know at the outset that you expect them to take turns speaking. (If you don't know all the children's names, you may want to arrange with the teacher to have the children wear nametags so you can call on them by name.)

Keep the age of your audience in mind. A child's interests and understanding evolve through generally predictable stages of development. Plan your presentation accordingly. Don't expect young children to be able to focus for more than twenty minutes.

Tips for Talking about Art

A goal for the Art Appreciation program is to help beginning viewers create personal meaning in a work of art. While your impulse may be to immediately begin teaching, more is gained in the long run if you take the time to help the children establish an emotional connection with the art. The questions below help kids find their own relevance in works of art, and thereby learn to value art as having something to do with their own lives.

- **What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?** "What is going on?" instead of "What do you see?" invites a consideration of relationships and interactions and taps into children's natural interest in stories.
- **How would you feel if you were "in" this work of art?** What would you hear? How would something feel to touch? Imagining the picture as an environment engages all the senses.
- **What person or object in this picture do you think was most important to the artist?** What has a lot of details? Where are there bright colors? What is the biggest?
- **How would the artwork seem different if you could make a change?** What would happen if you changed a color? Made something bigger or smaller? Moved an object or person? Left something out? Added more details?