Welcome to the Portland Art Museum.

During your visit, we encourage you to use the galleries as spaces for dialogue, conversation, and reflection.

Explore together, look closely, and find a place within the museum to sit, rest, and talk about what you see and experience.

- Ask questions
- Listen with care
- Share your views

Art has the power to spark curiosity, celebrate creativity, bring people together, and help us share our own stories and voices.

This guide includes a few suggestions to spark thinking and conversation during your visit to the museum.

We hope you find moments to reflect and engage in dialogues based in respect, healing, and understanding.

EXPLORING THE GALLERIES

Take some time and experience art around the museum. Think about your responses, and have a conversation with someone else in which you share your perspective and listen to theirs.

Consider these guiding questions as a place to start:

- How might some of the images, ideas, or questions represented in these artworks affect you personally?
- Are there any ways in which these artists might be challenging you and your perspectives?
- What life experiences of your own might connect with the artworks on view?

WHY DIALOGUE?

Dialogue is a powerful mode of conversation that genuinely seeks mutual understanding. It can occur between friends, co-workers, family members, and even among strangers. And it can certainly occur between people who do not share the same experiences, perspectives, or ideas. Learning to listen carefully and disagree respectfully are essential skills in today’s world.

REFLECTION

If you’ve used this guide to spark a conversation, reflect on any insights you’ve gained and how you might extend this experience.

- Have you noticed anything new about yourself and how you view the world?
- How might these conversations help you better understand someone else’s perspective?
- How might you create more opportunities for reflection and dialogue in your own life?
TALKING & LISTENING STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES

Children are curious and constantly ask questions about the world around them. In one breath, they might ask about a range of topics — from the weather to something they heard on the news. Whether at home, in the car, or here at the museum, it can be difficult to know how respond when difficult questions come up.

To help support these types of conversations here at the museum, we wanted to offer a few flexible suggestions.

Adapted from “Talking with Kids about the News,” a resource for parents available online at www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/news

Start by finding out what your child knows. When a difficult issue comes up, ask an open-ended question like “What have you heard about it?” This encourages your child to let you know what they are thinking.

Ask a follow up question. Depending on your child’s comments, ask another question to get them thinking, such as “Why do you think that happened?” or “What do you think people should do to help?”

Explain simply. Give children the information they need to know in a way that makes sense to them. At times, a few sentences are enough.

Listen and acknowledge. If a child sees or hears something that might worry and upset them, recognize their feelings and comfort them. This acknowledges your child’s feelings, helps them feel secure, and encourages them to tell you more.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This guide draws from the following resources to promote active, productive dialogue and reflection. Learn more by visiting the websites listed here:

PBS – Talking with Kids
pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids

Teaching for Change
teachingforchange.org

Teaching Tolerance
tolerance.org

The Public Conversation Project
publicconversations.org

Ask Big Questions
askbigquestions.org

“Talking in museums is one of the things that makes them matter.”
- Adam Gopnik, writer