

HAVE CONVERSATIONS HERE

You are welcome to talk and have conversations here at the museum. We encourage you to use the galleries throughout the museum as spaces for dialogue, while always remaining respectful of all visitors.

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

- Share your views.
- Ask questions.
- Listen with care.

The team here at the Portland Art Museum invites our entire community to see this museum as a place for **dialogue, reflection, and coming together**. During your visit, we encourage you to open yourself to the creative energies of art, connect with your own personal experiences, and even consider how artists can challenge your own viewpoints and perspectives. 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. We hope you find moments during and after your visit to reflect and engage in dialogues based in respect, healing, and understanding.

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.

EXPLORE THE GALLERIES

Consider visiting artworks on view that more directly explore some of the politically- and socially-engaged issues you might hear on the news and experience in your own neighborhood or community.

Memory Unearthed (on view beginning October 27)
Floor 2M, Jubitz Center for Modern & Contemporary Art

BETWEEN (open through October 14)
Floor 4, Jubitz Center for Modern & Contemporary Art

For Freedoms banners (on view October 1 – November 6)
Exterior Sculpture Plaza

Take some time to experience these galleries, think about your responses, and have a conversation with someone else in which you share your perspective and listen to theirs. Consider these questions:

- *How might issues and questions related to these artworks affect you personally? How are these artists challenging you?*
- *What life experiences of your own might connect with the work by these artists?*

REFLECTION

If you've used this guide to spark any conversations with others—whether during or after your visit to the museum—think about 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?*



TALKING & LISTENING STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES

Talking about difficult topics with kids can be challenging. 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 for all ages, we wanted to offer a few flexible suggestions. These strategies might also help your family talk together about some of the socially- or politically-relevant artworks you might encounter during your visit to the museum.

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

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.

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.

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?”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This guide draws from the following projects and resources to develop these strategies 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