

Tour Procedures

Procedures for Giving a Tour

Tour Scheduling

The tour coordinators (612-870-3140) schedule all public, private, and self-guided group tours except tours of exhibitions with admission charges, which are scheduled by the Department of Visitor & Member Services' sales and service representatives. The tour coordinators integrate these tours into their centralized scheduling system and monitor the number and size of all groups in the galleries to insure comfort and adequate space for a positive experience.

Tour Assignments

Each year you volunteer, you will be asked to submit a Docent Questionnaire specifying topics, days, and times you prefer for giving tours. The tour coordinators will use the information provided to assign you to public and private tours, including many school tours.

Types of Volunteer Assignments

Private and School Tours: By advance reservation only, for groups of 10 or more of all ages. These tours meet in the front outer lobby.

Public Tours: Regularly scheduled, drop-in tours for the general public. These tours begin by the Information desk in the inner lobby, unless otherwise specified.

Art Carts: Hands-on learning stations available on a drop-in basis.

Stationed Docents (Ask Me About the Art): Docent-led informal gallery discussions. Occasionally scheduled by request for corporate events, special exhibition openings, Family Days, and other events.

Spotlights: 20-minute, facilitated discussions about a single work of art. These discussions meet at the featured object.

Tour Days

Based on the questionnaire, you will be assigned a "tour day" (Tuesday through Sunday and Thursday evening). Docents will be assigned tours and Art Cart shifts only on their tour days, unless permission is given to make an assignment on another day of the week. For example, if you are a Thursday evening docent, it does not mean you will be assigned tours/Art Carts *every* Thursday; however, you will not be assigned shifts on other days of the week.

Tour Confirmations

When you are assigned a tour, you will receive a Tour Confirmation form in your box for *each* tour two to four weeks before the tour date. (Note that two weeks in advance is the requirement stated in the Docent Program Guidelines.) The form will give you the following information:

- name of the group/organization
- date and time of the tour
- grade or age level
- number of people
- subject of the tour

- names and contact information for assigned docents (including lead guide, if appropriate)
- contact person, phone numbers, and the best time to call
- special information or requests

Substitutes

If you are unable to give an assigned tour, **it is your responsibility to find a substitute**. Two “no shows” are grounds for dismissal. When an emergency arises at the last minute, please contact one of the tour coordinators as soon as possible. **If you are substituting for another docent, it is your responsibility to let the Tour Office and the lead docent know of the change**. Please have the tour confirmation number, printed near the top of the confirmation form, available when you call.

Checking Out

Please advise the Tour Office at least 4-6 weeks in advance if you will be unavailable to give tours for a given date or group of dates due to travel plans, work commitments, etc. When you return from travel, allow yourself a day or two to recover before being assigned tours. Checkout forms are available in the Tour Office.

Arranging Tours

Although we encourage you to invite your friends to the museum for tours, do not privately arrange tours for any special group without going through the Tour Office. If you are aware that a certain group wishes to have you lead a tour, tell them to request you as their docent when they make their reservation.

Lead Docent

The lead docent is indicated on the Tour Confirmation in bold type in the lower left corner. **The lead docent is responsible for contacting the group leader** (using the guidelines in the following section) **to gather information and disseminate it to the other docents**. Please call each of the other docents on the tour individually. If you are assigned a tour (but not as lead docent) and you are not contacted one week before the tour, please call the lead docent. The Tour Office calls the lead docent to indicate if a tour has been canceled. The lead docent then informs the other docents giving the tour.

Lead Docent Responsibilities

1. Call the contact person (usually the person who scheduled the tour for the group) promptly after receiving your Tour Confirmation. (A few minutes after 8:30 a.m. or around 3:00 p.m. are good times to reach teachers.) If you need to call a teacher at home, do not call after 9:00 p.m. (See pp. 47-50 for more information regarding school groups.)
2. Introduce yourself as the lead docent and let the contact person know you are preparing for their visit.
3. Confirm all information you have been given on your form, including date, time, age/grade level, number in group, and subject of tour. Gather as much information as you can about the group without imposing on the contact person’s time. Choose appropriate questions from the following list:

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- A. Is this the group's first visit?
 - B. What does the teacher (leader) hope to accomplish? Are there areas of the collection that are of special interest?
 - C. Does the teacher want the tour to correspond to current classroom studies? If yes, discuss. If necessary, explain that we cannot guarantee that they will see all requested works of art.
 - D. Will the group have an assignment related to the tour?
 - E. What, if anything, has the group done to prepare for their visit? Have they viewed our pre-tour video? MIA's Department of Teacher Resources lends this video to groups (612/870-6333). Also encourage teachers to use ArtsConnectEd (www.artsconnected.org), the museum's website for teachers and students, in order to view objects in advance of their visit.
 - F. Do any of the visitors have requests for accommodation, such as wheelchairs or ASL interpreters? For visitors who are blind or have low vision, we can offer an individualized touch tour. Please let the tour coordinators know if this is required.
 - G. What else is planned for the day, before or after the tour?
4. Ask the contact person for his/her help in making the tour run smoothly.
- A. Ask the leader to notify the Tour Office if the number of students/visitors changes.
 - B. Do they have any questions about the tour or the museum?
 - C. Ask that the participants be divided into tour groups of 10-15 before the tour if there is more than one docent.
 - D. Remind the leader of the *requirement* of having one adult chaperone per group of 10-15 students. Ask the leader to inform accompanying school group chaperones of their responsibilities. Refer them to the "Guidelines for a Great Museum Visit" sent with their Tour Confirmation.
 - E. Ask that younger children (grades K-6) be given name tags with the child's first name printed large and with dark ink. **Note:** For safety reasons, some schools prohibit the use of nametags.

Calling Other Assigned Docents

1. Call all the other docents assigned to the tour once you have spoken to the contact person. Do this as soon as possible and at least one week ahead. **Use the telephone or e-mail rather than museum boxes to convey information, as docents are not always able to check their boxes weekly.**
2. Ask for preferences for a starting point or assign one. Discuss routing. Be aware of closed galleries or objects taken off view. As soon as possible, check the bi-weekly events schedule in the Tour Office for other tours scheduled at the same time that might affect the tour routes.
3. Arrange to meet 10 to 15 minutes before the tour in the Tour Office to discuss last-minute arrangements, and plan to go to the lobby as a group. Remember that docents must arrive at the museum at least *20 minutes* before any tour.
4. When a large group from one school or organization has scheduled several tours at different times, it is not necessary for each lead docent to call the contact person. (A group leader might receive 4 or 5 calls asking the same questions.) Decide who among you will make the contact call. That person will pass information on to the other lead docents who in turn will call the assigned docents on their tours.

Checklist and Guidelines: Private and School Tours

1. Arrive 20 minutes or more before tour time. Wear your security/name badge while in the building
2. Check into the Tour Office. You may leave your personal belongings there. Due to limited space during the winter months, please leave your coat at the coat check in the lobby.
3. Check the bi-weekly event schedule to avoid conflicts with other groups in the galleries.
4. Walk your tour route. Note gallery changes, removal of objects, etc.
5. Meet the other docents on your tour in the Tour Office 10 to 15 minutes before the tour to share last minute information.
6. Be in the outer lobby to meet your group at least 5 minutes before tour time. **School groups:** a VMS staff person greets each school group (on weekday mornings) and makes sure they have divided the class into the appropriate number of groups based on the number of docents assigned. **Private groups:** the lead docent greets the group leader and divides up the group as necessary.
7. The lead docent introduces the other docents and assigns a docent to each group.
8. Direct adult visitors to the coat check, if necessary. For school groups, ask leaders to assist in collecting students' coats and placing them in plastic bags and the coat bins.
9. If your tour group does not arrive within 10 to 15 minutes of their scheduled time, call the Tour Office from the lobby. They will phone for information.
10. If a group arrives 10 to 15 minutes late, the lead docent checks with the other docents to see if they can stay. Then the lead docent checks the visitors' schedule, explains if the tour must be shortened, and makes certain that all docents and visitors understand what time they are to return to the lobby.
11. If a group has not arrived on time, you must wait 40 minutes after the scheduled arrival time before leaving. (You will still receive credit for this tour.)

Private and School Tours Format

Introduction

1. Once you have collected your tour group from the lobby, take them to a quieter place to begin your introduction. (*Do not* use the Family Center space.)
 - A. Introduce yourself and welcome the group to the museum.
 - B. In a brief and friendly manner, tell them what kind of things they can expect to see on the tour (the subject) and what they are going to discover about these objects (the theme).
 - C. In your most diplomatic (yet authoritative) manner, remind visitors not to touch and not to run (school groups), and explain that they need to stay together. By using inquiry, you can engage them in a discussion of why they must not touch, run, etc. (See “Guidelines for a Great Museum Visit” for positive ways to discuss rules.)
2. Student groups: Ask the group leader or chaperone to “bring up the rear” and to assist you in maintaining order in the galleries. We do send information about chaperone responsibilities to the tour contact person, but the message does not always get communicated. Many chaperones on school visits are parents who will be pleased to assist you.

Tour

3. As you discuss an object, stand to one side facing the group. **Be certain to maintain a one-foot distance between the objects and yourself (ask your group to do the same).**
4. Seat young children before objects periodically. For adult visitors, ask if anyone requires a gallery stool. They are available in the first floor corridor (gallery 110).
5. Refer to the inquiry and VTS sections of this manual for ways to involve your group.
6. Use well-planned transitions to move your group from one object to the next.
7. Confine your tours to one hour unless other arrangements have been made. (Buses run on tight schedules, and visitors—adults and children—have limited attention spans.)
8. Be flexible. **Expect** that occasionally you will be unable to use the object you want. Have a back-up plan! Use an unexpected change in plans as an opportunity for you and your group to explore and discover together.

9. Be considerate of your fellow museum guides. If you notice that a guide is waiting for the object you are discussing, try to move on as quickly as possible. **Remember, Art Adventure Guides have priority at art works in their sets.** If you are the docent who is waiting, quietly indicate by voice or hand signal that you will be back shortly. Courtesy is contagious!
10. Remember that sound echoes in the galleries. Moderate your voice accordingly.

Conclusion

11. At the end of your tour:
 - A. Summarize your main points or invite visitors to recall their favorite objects.
 - B. Thank the group for coming. Encourage them to return with family and friends.
 - C. Return the group to the main entrance or direct them to an area they wish to see if they are staying longer.
 - D. Discuss your tour with the other guides. What worked well? What would you do differently?
12. If you are asked for further information, send it promptly.

Additional Information for Private and School Tour Groups

Along with a copy of the Tour Confirmation, the group leader for each privately scheduled tour will receive some additional information, depending on the type of group (school or other). These materials are designed to help make the museum visit as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. It will be helpful for you to review “Guidelines for a Great Museum Visit” in preparation for the arrival of your private and school tour groups.

Bringing New Groups to the Museum

Be an art ambassador. Introduce someone to the Institute!

Docents are strongly encouraged to bring groups of their own to the museum for private tours. You can bring church groups, school groups, civic organizations, corporate groups, family, friends—any group of 10 or more people who would like to learn about art at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

To arrange your own private tours, you need to work with the tour coordinators to make all the necessary arrangements. Call (612/870-3140) or stop in to schedule the tour for your group *at least* four weeks in advance. The further in advance you schedule a tour, the better your chances of getting the date and time you prefer. The tour coordinators must consider other tours going on at the same time and in the same galleries. They also need to make sure there is someone available to give the tour (in most cases it will be you if it is a group you bring in). All organized tour groups of 10 or more must be scheduled through the Tour Office or the security guards will not allow you into the galleries (especially if another tour is scheduled for that space).

The tour coordinators will need to know a few things in order to schedule your tour:

- Date and time
- Alternate date and time
- Number in group
- Name of school/organization
- Tour type/subject (for example, “Made in America”)
- Name of group leader or teacher
- Group leader’s home address and phone
- School/organization phone and address
- Requests for accommodation (such as wheelchair access) and other requests (specific themes, objects to be addressed)

Checklist and Guidelines: Public Tours

1. Arrive 20 minutes or more before the tour is scheduled to begin. Wear your security/name badge while in the building.
2. Check in to the Tour Office. You may leave your personal belongings there. Due to limited space during the winter months, please leave your coat at the coat check in the lobby.
3. Check the bi-weekly events schedule for other tours scheduled to be in the galleries during your tour.
4. Walk your tour route. Note gallery changes, removal of objects, etc.
5. Public tours of the permanent collection and special exhibitions begin by the Information desk in the inner lobby. (Public tours of special exhibitions sometimes begin at the entrance to the appropriate exhibition space. You will be informed if this is the case.)
6. Call x6323 **at least 10 minutes in advance** to let VMS (Visitor and Member Services) know that they should announce the tour. **Stay on the line until someone answers.** Tell the person you are the docent for the public tour. On weekends, check in with the Information desk and they will make sure the tour is announced.
7. If you are starting with only a few people, let the person at the Information desk know where you are going to begin the tour in case latecomers want to join you. If no audience is present, **wait 20 minutes** after the scheduled time of the tour. For special exhibition tours, you are urged to then move into the galleries and talk with visitors, and a group may develop.
8. Although public tours have an assigned subject, they may be modified at your discretion to suit the needs of the group. Accommodate the wishes of your audience as much as possible. If they ask for something that is not within the range of your knowledge, do not be embarrassed to say so. No one can be expected to know everything. You could still explore the work together, engaging the group in careful looking.
9. Visitors on public tours should feel free to step in and out of tours when they wish to do so. Do not feel insulted if someone leaves your tour. You might announce at the beginning that they have this option.
10. **After the tour, return to the Tour Office bulletin board to record your name and the number of people on the tour.** This is important for statistics as well as to ensure that you receive tour credit.

Always keep in mind that your main objective is to make our visitors' experience of the museum as pleasant, comfortable, engaging, and informative as possible. Take a deep breath, relax, and enjoy yourself!

Public Tours Format

Introduction

1. After the tour is announced, let those waiting by the Information desk know you will be leading the tour. Once the group has gathered and you are ready, begin with your general introduction.
 - A. Introduce yourself and welcome the group to the museum. Ask questions to aid you in assessing your audience; for example, “Have you been to the Institute before?”
 - B. In a brief and friendly manner, tell them what to expect on the tour. How long will it last? (about 1 hour) What is the tour topic/title? (for example, A Taste of Asia) What is your style/format? (inquiry with discussion, etc.)
 - C. Remind visitors not to touch the artworks and that food and drink are not allowed in the galleries. If there are small children, you may also need to remind them not to run in the museum and to stay with the group.
2. Introduce your theme (for example, Art Reflects the Culture). You may choose to elaborate on your theme in your introduction or wait until you are in the galleries—perhaps near your first object or near a map or other useful didactic panel.

Tour

3. As you discuss an object, stand to one side facing the group. **Be certain to maintain a one-foot distance between the objects and yourself (ask your group to do the same).**
4. With young children or older adults, seat the group before objects periodically. Gallery stools are available for use in the first floor corridor (gallery 110), should you wish to use them with visitors of any age.
5. Refer to the inquiry and VTS sections of this manual for ways to involve your group.
6. Use well-planned transitions to move your group from one object to the next.
7. Confine your tours to one hour unless other arrangements have been made. (Museum visitors have time constraints and limited attention spans.)
8. Be flexible. **Expect** that occasionally you will be unable to use the object you want. Have a back-up plan! Use an unexpected change in plans as an opportunity for you and your group to explore and discover together.

9. Be considerate of your fellow museum docents and guides. If you notice that a docent or guide is waiting for the object you are discussing, try to move on as quickly as possible. **Remember, Art Adventure Guides have priority at art works in their sets.** If you are the guide who is waiting, quietly indicate by voice or hand signal that you will be back shortly. Courtesy is contagious!
10. Remember that sound echoes in the galleries. Moderate your voice accordingly.

Conclusion

11. At the end of your tour:
 - A. Summarize key ideas and discussion points and/or ask the group to share their favorite object from the tour.
 - B. Thank the group for coming and encourage them to come back again.
 - C. Direct the group to other areas of the museum or leave them to continue their exploration of the gallery you toured.
 - D. Return to the Tour Office and record the number of visitors on your tour.
 - E. Think about how the tour went. What worked well? What would you do differently?

Note: Please hand out public tour surveys to tour participants and ask them to turn them in at the Information desk (see next page). The forms are available in the Tour Office.

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Thank you for joining in an MIA Tour. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your feedback will help us improve the MIA Tour Program. We value what you think!

Please rate your experience below:

	Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Very Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied	Does not apply
Overall Tour Experience	5	4	3	2	1	○
Tour Guide's communication	5	4	3	2	1	○
Tour Guide's respect for visitors, comments, and questions	5	4	3	2	1	○
Opportunity to carefully and thoughtfully look at each work of art	5	4	3	2	1	○
Opportunity to share my thoughts and observations	5	4	3	2	1	○

1) Are you inspired to learn more about something as a result of today's tour? Yes No
Please comment:

2) The MIA Tour encouraged me to make connections between the art and myself. Yes No
Please comment:

3) How did you hear about MIA Tours? *Check all that apply.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper ad or article	<input type="checkbox"/> MIA Web site
<input type="checkbox"/> MIA ARTS magazine	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube
<input type="checkbox"/> MIA email newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth
<input type="checkbox"/> MIA postcard	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

4) Will you recommend an MIA Tour to others? Yes No
Please comment:

5) What can we do next time to make your experience even better?

Thank you for your time! As you leave, please drop off your completed survey at the Information Desk.

Procedures for the Art Carts

Confirmations

When you are assigned an Art Cart shift, you will receive a Tour Confirmation form in the mail approximately one (1) month before the shift date. The form will give you the following information:

- Date, time and subject area/gallery of the Art Cart shift
- Names of assigned docents and/or guides
- Special information

Substitutes

If you are unable to make a shift, **it is your responsibility to find a substitute.** Two “no shows” are grounds for dismissal. When an emergency arises at the last minute, please contact one of the tour coordinators as soon as possible. **If you are substituting for another docent or guide, it is your responsibility to let the Tour Office and the lead docent or guide know of the change.** Please have the tour confirmation number, printed near the top of the confirmation form, available when you call.

Checklist and Guidelines: Art Cart

1. Arrive 20 minutes before your shift is scheduled to begin in the gallery. Wear your security/name badge while in the building.
2. Check into the Tour Office. You may leave your personal belongings there.
3. Meet with the other docent or guide assigned to the cart in the Tour Office 15-20 minutes before the shift is scheduled to begin.
4. Go together to get the cart out of storage and position it in the designated space in the gallery.
5. Set-up the cart as quickly and as quietly as possible, especially if there are visitors in the gallery. Using the inventory sheets provided, check to make sure all the objects and supplies are there and in good condition.
6. Call Visitor and Member Services staff or volunteers at x6323 to make an announcement **at least 10 minutes** before the shift is scheduled to begin and **again midway through the shift**. On weekends, check in with the Information desk and they will make sure the art cart is announced.
7. You may take short breaks during your shift, if necessary. **Be sure one of the docents or guides on the shift stays with the cart at all times. The cart should never be left unattended.** If you find yourself alone at the cart and you need to leave it for a moment, call the Tour Office at x3140 and a tour coordinator will assist you.
8. Keep a running tally of the number of people you interact with in the gallery. (There is a tally counter on each cart.)
9. When your shift is over, pack and store the objects as you found them. Make a note of any missing or damaged objects and tell the Tour Office on your way out.
10. Stop in the Tour Office and record your name and the number of visitors who stopped at the cart. This is important for statistical purposes as well as to insure you receive credit for your work.

For more on cart objects and techniques for facilitating the Art Cart, consult the materials specific to the Art Cart(s) you facilitate.

Procedures for Stationed Docents

Confirmations

When you are assigned to be stationed in the gallery as an “Ask Me About the Art” interpreter, you will receive a confirmation form in the mail approximately one (1) month in advance. The form will give you the following information:

- date and time of your shift
- special information

Substitutes

If you are unable to make a shift, **it is your responsibility to find a substitute.** Two “no shows” are grounds for dismissal. When an emergency arises at the last minute, please contact one of the tour coordinators as soon as possible. **If you are substituting for another docent or guide, it is your responsibility to let the Tour Office and the lead docent or guide know of the change.** Please have the tour confirmation number, printed near the top of the confirmation form, available when you call.

Checklist and Guidelines: Stationed Docents

1. Arrive 20 minutes or more before your shift begins. Wear your security/name badge while in the building.
2. Check into the Tour Office. You may leave your personal belongings there. Pick-up an “Ask Me About the Art” button.
3. Position yourself in a visible place in the gallery. Be proactive and as accessible and friendly as possible. You may want to stand in an area that contains objects you are particularly interested in or feel comfortable talking about. Feel free to approach visitors and ask if they have any questions or offer information.
4. You may take a reasonable number of short breaks (5-10 minutes) during your shift. It is best to do so when the gallery is not busy.
5. After your shift, return to the Tour Office to sign in and record the number of people you interacted with on the sheet posted on the bulletin board. This is important for statistical purposes and to insure you receive credit for your time.