POST-VISIT ACTIVITY
Journaling

Level: Grades 2 and up; adaptable to level of students

Objectives:
- To enable children to see themselves as artists and appreciators of art.
- To engage students in reflecting on the experience of visiting an art museum.
- To explore the process of experimentation and editing – using an entry from their journal to evolve or more fully develop an idea through drawing or writing.

Introduction:
After visiting The Carle your students will likely have different ideas about what they saw at the museum. They may have revised their thinking about what museums display, what sort of experiences they offer, and what constitutes art. Your students may have been moved or excited by a particular artwork or felt validated in their own creation of art. This is a great time to return to the journal that was started prior to the visit and revisit the guiding question(s) or topics you and your class chose to discuss.

Returning to the journals:
Begin by gathering the class together and discussing The Museum visit. Ask students to share what they noticed or remember about the visit. Was the visit surprising to anyone? Return to the guiding question you chose before you went to The Museum. If you created a visual display of their thinking before (a chart, a list, a web, etc.) make sure it is visible. Invite students to compare what they thought before the visit to what they think now. Are there any similarities or differences? If so, highlight them as places of interest to talk about. Hand back the journals to allow your students to return to the place of reflection they were in when they created them. Ask if anyone wants to share what they have worked on. If they made entries at The Carle, ask them to share the similarities and differences between experiences of journaling in class and at The Museum. Displaying books represented in the exhibition you saw can help children to remember what they saw and help to spark ideas. Give children the opportunity to add to their journals using the remaining blank pages. Students who would like to may choose a sketch or idea from their art journal and begin experimenting with it.

Experimentation:
Artists have many choices to make in order to convey thoughts/ideas with their works. They often ask themselves questions to help move a sketch along the artistic
process. Students who are ready could begin experimenting with their sketch or idea, and these questions: How could it change? What happens if I try a different composition or color? What if I try the same idea in two different mediums such as drawing and collage? Which do I think best supports my idea?

Students might need help seeing the artistic opportunities that the experimentation process holds. Guidance through the process can be very helpful for the student, especially in the beginning. Using Eric Carle’s artistic process (your group might have seen a display of a work in its varied states of completion at The Carle) as an example, can be clarifying. Remember, the art journal can be a work of art in itself!

**Materials:** Students who are ready to move onto experimentation would benefit from an arrangement of materials to use in their work. A selection of papers, collage materials, scissors, adhesives, colored pencils, markers, etc. can enhance the experience.

**Possible extensions:**
- Ask students if they would be willing to share a page from their journal with the rest of the class and explain their thinking when they made the entry.
- Ask students what discoveries they made when making additions to the journal. Ask if journaling was a different experience than sitting down with the idea of creating art in mind.
- Ask if students would like to include their journal or a section of it in a display to be shared with other members of the school or community, or for a bound volume to be kept in the classroom.
- Display finished works in a classroom gallery and invite discussion.

**Resources (Some are available for purchase at http://www.carlemuseum.org/shop):**
- Beautiful Stuff! Learning with Found Materials by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella Gandini
- Children, Art, Artists by Vea Vecchi and Claudia Giudici, Editors
- Exhibiting Student Art by David Burton
- Rapunzel’s Supermarket: All about Young Children and Their Art by Ursula Kolbe
- Artist to Artist by The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art
- Wings of an Artist by multiple children’s book authors
- Talking with Artists Vol. III by Pat Cummings
- Seen Art? by Jon Scieszka

**Connected Activities:**

EveryTHING is Art
Making a Simple Book