**PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY**

**Journaling**

**Level:** Grades 2 and up; adaptable based on level of students

**Objectives**
- To help students make a personal connection to the artistic process
- To enable children to see themselves as artists and appreciators of art
- To engage students in thinking about how journals can be used to record and explore ideas

**Introduction**

Journals offer important opportunities to record ideas, observations, and thoughts in a non-judgmental, free-form way. They can also be used to help students explore their own creative and artistic side. Artists are often asked, “Where do ideas come from?” Many will cite their journals as the first place to explore ideas. It’s where they go to do quick sketches, write words and thoughts, and make plans for a book or other work of art, without worrying about a finished product. Often many versions of a piece of art are created before illustrators decide that their piece is ready to be included in a finished book; and it can all begin with journaling.

**Preparation**

Using the Post-Visit Activity entitled *Making a Simple Book*, have students create six-page books from a single sheet of 12 x 18 paper to be used as a journal. They might also choose to use several sheets of paper (all the same size) with thicker paper (such as oak tag) for front and back covers. These books can then be bound with string or yarn through two or three holes, or with staples. This option allows books to be made any size and in any color(s) the student might select. Be sure to practice making a simple book and explore the process of journaling before presenting this to your students. You will then have a sample journal to show when introducing the topic to your students.

**Exercise**

Gather your students for a group brainstorming/discussion session. You might choose to start off by brainstorming together a list of ideas, questions, and topics that could be explored through journaling. Alternatively, you might use some of the guiding questions below to begin the discussion. Have a large paper or other recording surface available so the ideas generated can instantly be made visible to the whole group. This will also aid in demonstrating how lists, webs, doodles, notes, etc. can help the creative process.
Suggested Guiding Questions

- What comes to mind when I say the word “art?”
- What comes to mind when I say “art museum?”

Do you see yourself as an artist? Why or why not? What do you like about creating art? What don’t you like?

After the discussion ask the students to take some time to record their thoughts, ideas, reflections, and/or images that come to mind in their journals. By offering them just a pen or pencil, you can keep the focus on writing and/or drawing rather than on a particular material. Be sure that your students leave some blank pages in their journals for reflection after their museum visit. Before sending students off to do independent work in their journals it may be helpful to have a few students share their initial ideas for journaling to help those who feel uninspired.

You may want to invite students to bring their journals on the day of the museum visit and allow five minutes for sketching. Please remember, only pencils are allowed in the galleries.

Refer to the post-visit activity sheet that accompanies this to further the journaling experience.

Resources (Some are available for purchase at www.carlemuseum.org/Shop)

- *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: 23 Major Illustrators Talk to Children about Their Art*, by multiple authors, published by Philomel
- *Wings of an Artist* by multiple authors, published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
- *Talking with Artists Vol. III*, by Pat Cummings
- *Seen Art?* by Jon Scieszka

Connected Activities

- EveryTHING is Art
- Making a Simple Book