Finding Your Way at the DMA: Tips for a Fun Family Visit

Less is more. Make your visit child-size and focus on just a few works of art that spark your child’s curiosity. Don’t feel like you need to see everything in one day. General admission at the Museum is always free and you can return again and again!

Keep your distance. The art won’t bite, but you still need to keep a safe distance (three feet is great).

Make it an adventure. Pass the reins to the kids and follow their interest! Let them choose where to go and what to see, and then give their imaginations a workout. You might search for favorite colors or animals, act out a story you see in the artwork, or play a game of I Spy.

Take a break. Little legs tire out easily in this big museum. Feel free to take a seat on a bench or even the floor as you spend time with a work of art. If your child is feeling extra wiggly, go to the Center for Creative Connections and visit Arturo’s Nest, a “please touch” space where kids can crawl, climb, and play.

Meet Arturo! Arturo, the DMA’s family mascot, is based on a ceramic vessel from Peru that’s more than 1,000 years old. The artist was probably inspired by the colorful macaws of South America. Look for this parrot-shaped container in the Ancient Art of the Americas Galleries on Level 4.

Do you always have your nose in a book? Come along with me and learn the secret ingredients to creating your own “happily ever after”!

1717 N Harwood, Dallas, Texas 75201

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IMAGES (details): Thomas Sully, Cinderella at the Kitchen Fire, 1843, oil on canvas, Dallas Museum of Art, gift of the Pauline Allen Gill Foundation, 2005.1; Frederic Edwin Church, The Icebergs, 1861, oil on canvas, Dallas Museum of Art, gift of Norma and Lamar Hunt, 1979.28; François-Auguste Biard, Seasickness at the Ball, on Board an English Corvette, about 1850s, oil on canvas, Dallas Museum of Art, gift of J. E. R. Chilton, 2011.27
LEVEL 4, AMERICAN ART GALLERIES

Cinderella at the Kitchen Fire
Thomas Sully, 1843

Who’s who?

A character is who the story is about. Characters can be people, or sometimes even animals. This painting tells the story of a very famous fairy tale princess—Cinderella. Find Cinderella and her stepsisters in this picture. What part of the story do you think is being told? How is this version of Cinderella different from the others you have seen in books or movies?

Did you know? Thomas Sully completed this painting in less than three months, and his model for Cinderella was his daughter Rosalie. The story of Cinderella was very popular at the time and had even been the subject of an opera that toured across the United States, with a stop in Sully’s hometown of Philadelphia.

LEVEL 4, AMERICAN ART GALLERIES

The Icebergs
Frederic Edwin Church, 1861

Setting the scene

The setting is where the story takes place. This painting is all about the setting! Imagine that you could jump into this scene. How would you describe your surroundings? What kind of story might happen in this place?

Can you spot a shipwreck in this painting? In 1859 Frederic Edwin Church chartered a schooner to explore and sketch the waters and landscape of the northern Atlantic Ocean. After completing this painting in 1861, he added the broken ship’s mast in 1863 in honor of a famous explorer who had sailed and perished in the icy Arctic waters.

LEVEL 2, EUROPEAN ART GALLERIES

Seasickness at the Ball, on Board an English Corvette
François-Auguste Biard, about 1860s

Ahoy! Ahoy! All hands on deck!

The problem in the story is called the conflict. Can you spot a conflict in this painting? Look carefully at the expressions on the people’s faces and the slant of the boat. How might the characters solve their problem? Act out what the people on this boat might do next. (The painting’s title might give you a hint!)

Did you know? François-Auguste Biard loved to travel around the world. This painting was inspired in part by his many voyages by boat. Some people believe that the artist painted himself into the picture! (Hint: he is wearing a cream-colored suit with a matching hat.)

LEVEL 3, WENDY & EMERY REVES COLLECTION

Now that you are an expert, it’s time to create your own story! Search for a gallery on Level 3 that looks like you have stepped into someone’s house. What kind of place is this? Who lives here? What kind of problem can you imagine happening here? Tell your story to your family and friends. Don’t forget your story ingredients!

Did you know? The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection is housed in a gallery designed to look like a real house. The actual home was a French villa that belonged to Coco Chanel, the famous fashion designer. It was later sold to art collector Emery Reves and his wife, Wendy. When Wendy donated the couple’s collection to the Museum in the early 1980s, she felt that “the art and the house can never be separated.”