

Slow Looking in the Gallery

The idea is simply that you look at one painting for a sustained period of time and perhaps increase the amount of time for subsequent viewings. For our first *Slow Looking* experience, we looked at *Bacchus and Ariadne* at the National Gallery, London for 20 minutes.

This is how I guided the kids, changing the focus slightly every 2 minutes or so. They could talk to each other, write notes, and/or draw. You may need to adapt questions based on the subject matter of the artwork.

- Look at the painting. Get a general feel for the big picture. What might this story be about?
- Look at the people and their movement.
- Look at the faces- what emotions do you see?
- Look at all of the plants and animals.
- Look at the non-living things
- Look at the relationships between the people (how they are looking at/moving in relation to each other). Relationships between the people and animals. Relationships between living and non-living things.
- What colors do you see?
- What tones do you see? Where is it dark? Where is it light? What's happening in the darkness/in the light?
- What shapes do you see? Look at the figures or colors. Can you see any shapes in the space between them?
- What questions do you have about this painting?
- Take one more look. Look into each corner. Look in the foreground and in the background. Do you see anything new that you didn't see before?

Follow-Up Activities/Discussion:

- Take some time to discuss the painting. What were the most interesting, surprising things you observed? What are some things that you observed right away? What didn't you observe until the last few minutes?
- Watch a film about the artwork/artist(s) that you saw.
- Discuss: How did the background of the artist feed into his/her work?
- Tell a story or write a poem based on the work of art you experienced.
- Create a trailer or poster advertising the artwork.