

# Pre-Visit Teacher's Guide

## At Home in Los Angeles

### Grade 3

A Program of the Education Department  
Skirball Cultural Center  
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Grade 3

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## Dear Teachers,

We hope you enjoy teaching the materials included in the pre-visit packet for our new gallery-based tour program, AT HOME IN LOS ANGELES.

### Description of the pre-visit materials:

The pre-visit materials include five separate activities for you to do with students prior to your visit to the Skirball Cultural Center. These activities are designed to encourage your students to think about the rich cultural tapestry that comprises Los Angeles. (State Standards - Social Studies 3.3) They will also help students explore their own cultural heritage and better understand how each individual is an important part of the community. (State Standards - Social Studies 2.2, 3.1) Through their experiences at the Skirball, we hope to inspire greater civic engagement and action motivated by the idea that we're all responsible for our communal welfare (Ed Cod Section 233.5(a)).

### Description of your museum experience:

Your museum visit will consist of two parts.

1) A tour of three galleries in our permanent exhibition, *Visions and Values: Jewish Life from Antiquity to America*, will give students an understanding of culture—both Jewish culture and other cultures present in Los Angeles. They will think about the cycles of life that people experience culture to culture, learn about and compare holidays through discussion and encounters with objects, and think about ways to improve their school or community while learning about museums, synagogues and other culturally significant gathering places.

2) In a hands-on lesson in the museum classroom, students will create an art project, a *tsedakah box* (“box of justice”), which they can take back to school and use to collect money, ideas, or kind words to help make their world a better place. (State Standards - Social Studies 1.5, 3.3, Visual Arts 1.0, 2.4, 3.4).

### Instructions for the day of your visit:

To make the tour run smoothly, please issue **NAME TAGS** to each student, written in large, bold letters and divide your class into two groups, i.e.: red & blue. In addition, please subdivide each group into 5 smaller groups.

Your class will leave with art projects in hand, so please **BRING TWO GROCERY BAGS OR ONE LARGE GARBAGE-SIZED BAG** in which to carry your projects back to school.

### Post-visit Opportunities:

This tour engages young students in thinking about serving their communities. In that interest, we've provided a number of resources for you to take advantage of after your visit.

One of our community partners is **ROOTS & SHOOTS**, a program of the **Jane Goodall Institute**. Roots & Shoots helps young people create and sustain service projects at their schools and in their communities. Any school is welcome to start a chapter, but if yours is a Title 1 school, you will receive a free membership (which includes a class visit from Erin Viera, Roots & Shoots Education Coordinator) because you've taken a tour at the Skirball!

We've also included a resource list of other Los Angeles organizations you might consider connecting with for a classroom visit, field trip, or community service project. The list is included in the "additional resources" section of this packet. There are also book titles that you can share with your class that relate thematically to your At Home in L.A. gallery tour.

We look forward to seeing you and your students the day of your At Home in L.A. tour. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns regarding these materials or your visit.

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## **At Home in Los Angeles Teacher Planning Sheet**

- Created a Name Tag for each child
- Divided children into two groups
- Created five small groups from each of the two halves, corresponding to five L.A. neighborhoods: Koreatown, Westwood, Hollywood, Crenshaw, Venice (you may want to put these neighborhoods on the nametags!).
- Brought two Grocery Bags to transport student art projects home
- Completed pre-visit materials

## Activities to prepare your students for their visit

### 1) Community Sense Walk

Objective:

Build awareness among students of their community.

Activity Steps:

1. Walk around your school's neighborhood. Each child should take a journal or sketchbook for map drawing, note taking, writing, and collecting observations of life in the community where your school is located.
2. Have students identify significant locations nearby on their papers – can be shops, public buildings, parks, bus / train stops, etc. List them and note why they are important in your community.
3. Remind students to use their senses. What kinds of things do you see, sounds do you hear, smells, textures that you can you touch? A sense walk can give you clues as to the “personality” of your neighborhood.
4. Once you return to your classroom, discuss what your students have discovered about their surroundings (you may want to have them break up into groups to do this in order to share ideas from more students). Ask: what are the things we most like about our neighborhood? Where are places we can go in our neighborhood for recreation, for support for a school trip or project, for homework, for beautifying your campus, for providing people with the help they might need? Where are places in our neighborhood where we could help out ourselves? What problems do we see that we could contribute to fixing?
5. Close the discussion by mentioning that their tour at the Skirball will provide them with a chance to think about making your school or community a better place. They will have the chance to act on these ideas beginning with a special art project.

### 2) Los Angeles Community Map

Objective: students use geographic terms (based on the concept of Place from the Five Themes of Geography to describe the physical and human characteristics of a place.

1. Assign each student (or pair of students) a different neighborhood in Los Angeles.
2. Using resources such as maps, travel books, brochures, websites, etc. have students research the physical and human characteristics of their neighborhood. Have students note facts for each of the following:
  - a. **Location** (relative to downtown for example)
  - b. **Physical Features** (especially any significant geographic features like coastline beaches, rivers, mountains, etc.)
  - c. **Landmarks** (monuments, significant public buildings or parks)

3. Provide students with a card or piece of white paper upon which to write their information. You may want to provide them with a template for this activity.
4. Using a large map on your white board or bulleting board, add students' cards to the map noting all of the major neighborhoods in the city.
5. Discuss the findings of each student or pair of students and the uniqueness of each neighborhood.

NOTE: Many websites offer descriptions of Los Angeles neighborhoods (travel books like Frommers, Let's Go, Not For Tourists Guides, etc.)

### 3) Cultural Values

Objectives: Students will understand the concept of values. Students will examine three different cultural values and seek connections between their own values and those mentioned on their tour at the Skirball.

During your At Home in Los Angeles class visit to the Skirball, students will be introduced to three main cultural values: welcoming the stranger, caring for the earth, and teaching and learning. These values are important within Jewish culture and among many other cultural groups as well, and we highlight them in this tour.

#### Activity Steps:

1. After discussing the meaning of each of the three values (welcoming the stranger, caring for the earth, and teaching and learning), ask students to look through magazines (or sketch) a picture that represents each of these values.
2. After they've found their three, have students add one more belief or value—something that is personally important to them such as being honest, helping animals, etc.—and find another picture that represents their personal value.
3. Have students get into groups and talk about times in their lives when they acted on these values (or they experienced them from other people). One value might be friendship and an example could be a time when the child helped a friend out who was feeling upset.
4. Closure questions: What would life be like in Los Angeles if we all lived by these values all of the time? How would life be different?



#### **4) Personal Timeline**

Objective: Students will consider their lives as comprised or marked by a series of important events.

During the At Home in Los Angeles tour, your class will examine lifecycle events across cultures, using Jewish culture as an example. In order to better understand the universality of life events, this activity allows students to think about the markers in their own lives that are in common with other students. Encourage students to add events that they think are important for them.

Have students create a personal timeline with a number of significant life events:

- Birth
- Naming
- Time you learned to play a sport / instrument
- Birth of a sibling
- First tooth loss
- Wedding of a parent or family member

## 5) How People Spend the Holidays

### Introduction

Holidays of all cultures are rich in tradition, symbolism, and history. Some are joyous festivals, some are serious holy days, some involve family rituals and community gatherings, some include special foods, songs, and prayers (which will be discussed during their tour).

#### Objectives:

Students will examine visual art depicting three different Jewish holidays and the practices and ritual objects that people use to commemorate them.

Students will use role-playing and physical interpretation of the scenes in the artwork.

Students will think about how holidays are celebrated differently and apply this thinking to the ways in which they celebrate with their families.

### Featured Works

Students will be able to see the following objects when they come to the Skirball, so these activities will familiarize them with looking at art and artifacts.

1. *Sabbath Afternoon*, a painting by Moritz Oppenheim
2. *Building Booths for Sukkot*, an etching by Unknown Artist
3. *Kindling the Hanukkah Lamp in Polish Jewish Home*, a drawing by K. Felsenhardt

## Background Information

### ***Sabbath Afternoon***

Oil painting, around 1860

Moritz Oppenheim



**Web Link:** To view this image online, [click here](http://www.skirball.org/TeacherPre-visits) (or type this case-sensitive URL into your browser: [www.skirball.org/TeacherPre-visits](http://www.skirball.org/TeacherPre-visits)) and select thumbnail #10.

One of a series of 20 oil paintings depicting Jewish family life, this painting was made around 1860. According to Jewish law, no work is permitted on the Sabbath, so this scene of family life shows the relaxed, calm atmosphere of a quiet afternoon. It shows the father in deep slumber while a young child recites the Hebrew lesson he has mastered. The mother is reading a book and ignoring the innocent flirtation between her daughter and the visiting students.

There are important ceremonial objects on the table including the braided loaves of *challah* (bread), the *Kiddush* cup (wine goblet), and the *Judenstern* (Sabbath lamp) suspended from the ceiling. Moritz Oppenheim was the first major Jewish artist to record Jewish religious observances—customs he recalled from his own orthodox childhood in Germany.

### ***Building Booths for Sukkot***

Etching, 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Unknown artist



**Web Link:** To view this image online, [click here](#) (or type this case-sensitive URL into your browser: [www.skirball.org/TeacherPre-visits](http://www.skirball.org/TeacherPre-visits)) and select thumbnail #8.

This etching depicts a classical, idealized rendering of the practice of building booths during the Jewish holiday of *Sukkot* (which occurs during the fall harvest). In this particular work, the booths are constructed on a lawn between groups of classical-looking buildings. The people setting the *sukkah* (hut or temporary dwelling in Hebrew) are dressed in togas with some of the men wearing turbans. Around the scene musicians and singers provide a festive atmosphere to this annual ritual commemorating the fall harvest and the gathering together of families and friends.

***Kindling the Hanukkah Lamp in Polish Jewish Home***

Drawing (colored chalk and gouache on paper), 1893  
Karl Felsenhardt



**Web Link:** To view this image online, [click here](#) (or type this case-sensitive URL into your browser: [www.skirball.org/TeacherPre-visits](http://www.skirball.org/TeacherPre-visits)) and select thumbnail #9.

In this scene of Jewish life, the artist depicts a number of activities associated with Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. Two boys play *dreidel*, a game of chance using a spinning top, while their father lights the ceremonial *hanukkiyah* (Hanukkah lamp, known colloquially as a *menorah* though the latter actually have seven branches vs. nine) commemorating each of the days of the festival. The mother and daughter look on while two other boys play together in the background.

### **Activity: Warm-up**

For this activity, your class will bring to life a painting of a Jewish scene.

1. Get students ready by practicing some simple feelings that they can put movements to. Prompt them with a few adjectives: sad, tired, happy, and ask them to act out the adjectives with their bodies.
2. Divide your class into three groups. Each group will look at a different painting from the Skirball Cultural Center that depicts a scene from a Jewish holiday (*Sukkot*, *Hanukkah*, or *Shabbat*). Each group should have the number of people as are in each painting. (You may have two groups working with the same painting if necessary.)
3. In their groups, prompt the students with the following questions and have them write down their answers in their journals or on a blank sheet of paper.
  - What are people doing in your picture?
  - What does it look like people do to celebrate this holiday?
  - What objects do you see in the picture?
  - What thoughts might be going through the minds of the people in the painting? What might they say to each other?
4. Have each group begin role-playing a *tableau*, a still physical picture of the painting.
  - They can experiment with pantomime. How does it feel to pretend to sit when there's no table there? What facial gestures can you create that mimic what the people in the painting are doing? What positions should your body be in to copy those of the people in the painting?
  - Treat this phase as an investigation by encouraging children to experiment, play different roles, try out different postures and poses.
  - Next have them add some sounds—sighs, shrugs, humming or singing, background music or sounds from nature, etc.
  - Finally have them each create one line of dialogue for their scene for each character. This will become their “skit” of the painting.

5. Allow students to rehearse their scenes and then perform them in front of the class.
6. Final questions to contrast and compare the paintings.
  - What were people doing in your picture?
  - Which picture was very active and which one was calm?
  - Which day was restful and quiet?
  - Which day was a celebration?
  - What do you think the meaning of this holiday is for Jewish people?
  - Does the painting remind you of a holiday that you and your family celebrate?
  - How does your family spend different holidays?
  - Why might an artist want to paint a picture of a holiday?

### **Extension Activity**

Compare holidays by having students share family objects from their holidays, or by interviewing parents or grandparents. Choose two specific holidays, such as Memorial Day and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, or Halloween and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Have students write down descriptions of each holiday on cards and place them inside two overlapping hula hoops laid on the floor, to create a larger-than-normal *Venn diagram*.

6) Additional Resources



[www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com)

## **Additional Resources**

### Books to Read with your Students

D'alusio, Faith and Peter Menzel. What the World Eats. Tricycle Press, Berkeley. 2008. Visiting 25 families in 21 countries, the authors look at what people around the world eat in a week and include cost and quantity. Facts about each country and a world map showing where these families live are included along with a comparison of similarities and differences.

Dresser, Norine. Multicultural Manners: New Rules of Etiquette for a Changing Society. John Wiley and Son, Inc., Canada, 1996. This book gives guidelines and suggestions for getting along in a multicultural society. It deals with appropriate etiquette relating to food, clothing, gift giving; how to avoid embarrassment at work, meals, weddings, funerals; and the differences and similarities of different and within religions.

Gust, John and McChesney, J. Meghan. Learning About Cultures, Literature, Celebrations, Games and Art Activities. Teaching and Learning Co., Carthage, IL, 1995. Information presented includes activities, literature, recommendations, and description of celebrations of various cultures (African American, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Jewish, Korean, Mexican, and Native American).

Jaskol, Julie and Lewis, Brian. City of Angels. Dutton Children's Books, New York, 1999. This book tells the story of Los Angeles, the second largest city in the nation, through a look at the many diverse cultural and geographic places of interest that can be found there. Beginning at the entrance to the Los Angeles Public Library and with collages, watercolors, and paper cuts, the reader learns of the history of the City and tells of twenty places to visit – from Olvera Street to Santa Monica pier to San Pedro.

Kindersley, Barnabas and Anabel. Celebrations!, DK Publishing, Inc., New York, NY., 1997. Photographer Barnabas Kindersley, writer Anabel Kindersley and UNICEF explore cultural traditions of children around the world with pictures of traditional costumes and customs and include first-person accounts of how holidays are celebrated. The celebrations are arranged by season and include Christmas in Germany, Hanukkah in the U.S. and Diwali in India among others.

Menzel, Peter. Material World: A Global Family Portrait. Sierra Club Books. San Francisco. 1995. Photojournalist, Peter Menzel, brought together 16 leading photographers to picture life in 30 nations by living with "average" families for one week, contrasting places such as a dirt house in Mali and the luxury home of a family in Kuwait, learning about their work, their possessions, and hopes for the future. Statistics and histories of each country are included.

Spier, Peter. People. Doubleday & Co., New York, 1980. This picture book tells of the diversity of humankind – how we are different, how similar. It discusses clothing, food, recreation, and worship illustrating the great variety that exists among peoples of different cultures and races.



The pictures show the uniqueness of people, color, size, systems of taste and belief, and varying physical and mental abilities.

### List of Partner Organizations

<b>Roots &amp; Shoots</b>	<a href="http://www.rootsandshoots.org">www.rootsandshoots.org</a>	<b>Roots and Shoots</b> mission is to foster respect and compassion for all living things, to promote understanding of all cultures and beliefs and to inspire each individual to take action to make the world a better place for people, animals and the environment. With tens of thousands of young people in almost 100 countries, the Roots & Shoots network connects youth of all ages who share a desire to create a better world.
<b>TreePeople</b>	<a href="http://www.treepeople.org">www.treepeople.org</a>	<b>TreePeople</b> is an environmental nonprofit that unites the power of trees, people and technology to grow a sustainable future for Los Angeles. TreePeople's mission is to inspire, engage and support people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable and to share the process as a model for the world.
<b>Friends of the Los Angeles River</b>	<a href="http://www.folar.org">www.folar.org</a>	<b>(FoLAR) Friends of the Los Angeles River</b> is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization founded in 1986, whose mission is to protect and restore the natural and historic heritage of the Los Angeles River and its riparian habitat through inclusive planning, education and wise stewardship.
<b>Pasadena SPCA</b>	<a href="http://www.pasadenahumane.org">www.pasadenahumane.org</a>	PHS is an independent, donor-supported, non-profit agency that provides animal care for abandoned and homeless animals. PHS is responsible for animal control and welfare for seven area cities that include LaCañada-Flintridge, San Marino, Sierra Madre and Arcadia, Glendale, Pasadena and South Pasadena.

<b>Heal the Bay</b>	<a href="http://www.healthebay.org/education">www.healthebay.org/education</a>	<b>Heal the Bay's</b> Mission: making southern California's coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean.
<b>Friends of Ballona Wetlands</b>	<a href="http://www.ballonafriends.org">www.ballonafriends.org</a>	<b>Friends of Ballona Wetlands'</b> mission is to champion the restoration and protection of the Ballona Wetlands, involving and educating the public as advocates and stewards
<b>Habitat for Humanity</b>	<a href="http://www.habitatla.org">www.habitatla.org</a>	Los Angeles ranks last in affordable housing in the U.S. and yet Habitat for Humanity is one of the few affordable homeownership programs serving families earning 30-80% of the median family income. Working with volunteers, families, corporations, congregations and donors Habitat tackles this important housing issue throughout the Los Angeles area.
<b>Los Angeles Regional Food Bank</b>	<a href="http://www.lafoodbank.org">www.lafoodbank.org</a>	The Los Angeles Regional Foodbank sources and acquires food and other products and distributes to needy people through charitable agencies or directly through programs.  The vision for the food bank is that no one goes hungry in Los Angeles County.
<b>St. Joseph's Center</b>	<a href="http://www.stjosephctr.org">www.stjosephctr.org</a>	<b>St. Joesph's</b> mission is to provide working, poor families, as well as homeless men, women, and children of all ages with the inner resources and tools to become productive stable and self-supporting members of the community.
<b>826 LA</b>	<a href="http://www.826la.org">www.826la.org</a>	<b>826LA</b> is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting students ages 6 to 18 with their creative and expository writing skills, and to helping teachers inspire their students to write.
<b>Get on the Bus</b>	<a href="http://www.getonthebus.us">www.getonthebus.us</a>	<b>Get On The Bus</b> brings children and their guardians/caregivers from throughout the state of California to visit their mothers and fathers in

		prison.
<b>Homeboy Industries</b>	<a href="http://www.homeboyindustries.org">www.homeboyindustries.org</a>	<b>Homeboy Industries</b> assists at-risk and formerly gang-involved youth to become positive and contributing members of society through job placement, training and education.