Tips for Guiding at ANU- Museum of the Jewish People

**Before the Tour:**

1. Get as much information as possible about the group before you start. Using the name of the synagogue, school, organization, etc. look them up on the internet or ask Eve, Lindsay or another museum staff for more information. The more you know, the better you can plan their connection with the museum.
2. Make sure you know which tour to use based on your group’s information. Tours are all on the guide’s site. If you’re not sure, ask Lindsay or Eve.
3. During your opening at the beginning of the tour, make sure to:
   1. Introduce yourself: name, your home country, how long you have been working at ANU
   2. “Welcome to ANU- Museum of the Jewish People. We are the largest Jewish museum in the world, and the only museum in the world that strives to tell the complete, unique and ongoing story of the Jewish People.”
   3. Give them an outline of what you will be doing, and encourage them to participate and document. “We will be going on an hour and a half tour today over three different floors. I’ll be sharing stories throughout the tour, and you’ll also have opportunities to explore for yourself. We will be taking the elevator up to the 3rd floor to start, then working our way down to the 2nd and 1st floors. There are restrooms on every floor, and there are both stairs and an elevator to get up and down the floors. There is seating at certain places in the museum. I will point it out to you as we go. This is going to be an interactive tour- I will be asking lots of questions because I want us to learn together. Please ask me any questions you have. Photography is absolutely encouraged throughout the tour. Take photos of things you like and want to remember! When you post on social media, remember to tag us!”
4. If you are doing the tour in a language that is not the group’s first language, SPEAK SLOWLY!

**During the Tour**

1. Try to find the special connection a group may have with the museum to touch their heart and make them feel part of the museum. For example,
   1. Bring a Momentum group (or women’s group) to the Women Trailblazer’s station on the 3rd floor.
   2. Bring an American Jewish group to the Great Migration section of the 2nd floor.
   3. Not sure which special section to point out to your group? Ask a fellow guide for suggestions. The Wall of Communities on the 2nd floor is a great place for any group to show their national representation.
2. Less is more. If visitors are connecting and enjoying a specific section of the museum, allow them to engage. Keep them where they are connecting and dive deeper into that area. For example, if they are connecting in From the Shtetl to the Big City, tell them another story of an object or individual from the room and let them enjoy.
3. Allow the visitors to feel like they are in control of the tour. You have the tour script and know the story you are trying to tell, but wherever possible ask the visitors to chose which direction to take. For example, on the 3rd floor ask the group which section to talk about: Theater, Dance, Cinema or Music.
4. Keep asking questions, questions, questions. Everyone’s favorite thing to talk about is themselves. By asking questions, you validate that their thoughts are important and transform the museum experience from being only educational to a completely experiential.
   1. Who will be in your family picture?
   2. How do you connect to the Jewish people?
   3. What is your favorite cultural station? Dance? Music? Literature?
   4. Who is your favorite Jewish artist?
   5. Who would you have included as a Jewish luminary in the film?
   6. What is a special food you eat with your family, and when?
5. Play games by asking challenging questions wherever possible. Even if the answers are simple, the encourages the visitor to be active.
   1. Who can find the unicorn in the synagogue ceiling?
   2. What item in this display looks surprising?
   3. What picture in this room looks like it doesn’t belong?
   4. Who can find a woman lighting candles in a closet?
   5. Who can find 9 miniature statues of Liberty?
6. If you give them free time and see them sitting, get them up and moving.
7. People love the “behind the scenes” stories of artifacts and installations. They become insiders and they love that. It is why they have a guide: to hear the stories that they can’t get from the audio guide.
8. Share small bits of your own life if you feel comfortable. For example, near the food interactive on the 3rd floor, you can share about a special dish that you eat with your family on Shabbat and what it tells about your background.
9. Make sure that when you are guiding you are standing in front of an artifact or signboard and you are actually talking about the thing you are standing in front of. Do not give a long talk about Jewish history in the lobby. We are here to engage people in what we have displayed in the museum- it’s why they are here at ANU!
10. Be aware and sensitive to other groups in the museum. Allow everyone a space where they can guide. Do not block the entrances to any of the exhibits with your group. Make eye contact with the other guides in the museum, make space for them and indicate subtly when you will be moving on.
11. If there is a group watching a movie do not bring your group there and try and talk over the movie.
12. Be aware that non-Hebrew speaking visitors are reading the subtitles of the movies. Do not let your group walk past and block their view. Example: The Masa video on the 2nd floor.
13. Do not talk about how little time there is to do the tour. Visitors should feel that they are getting value, and that they are seeing the highlights not that they are missing out on things. Encourage them to return for a future visit or to spend time after the tour (if they can) to wander around. They can also check out the brand new ANU website for the database and the ANU YouTube channel for more information.

**After the Tour:**

1. If you’re working with a school, synagogue or other form of educational group, give them the handouts about the Koret International School for Jewish Peoplehood (the ANU Educational Department) and tell them that we run educational programming for students across 25 countries.
2. Encourage them to take a group photo