# Teacher's Notes for 'Our Visit to the National Gallery of Ireland':

Children who come to the gallery with an idea of what to expect are usually more receptive to the experience. This list of discussion topics accompanies the slideshow presentation to introduce the National Gallery of Ireland and to help your class get the most from their visit. Each topic is adaptable according to age and level of understanding.

#### Where is the National Gallery?

- → It's in Merrion Square in Dublin.
- → Talk about the other famous buildings on Merrion Square Government Buildings, the National History Museum, etc. If travelling from outside Dublin it could be used to discuss what else they know about Dublin, for example: the capital city; the president lives there; Croke Park etc
- → Look at where else they will visit on the trip.

# How will we get there?

- → Discuss how long the journey will take
- → What method of transport they will use
- → Using the safe cross code when they are in the city centre.

#### What is a Gallery?

- → Discuss in class whether anyone has been to the gallery before?
- → Has anyone been to any other gallery or museum?
- → What was it like? What did they see?
- → Discuss collections the Gallery collects works of art from all over the world, arranged according to what country they are from. Museums collect objects and display them in very different ways. Libraries collect books sometimes very old and rare books.
- → Do they collect anything? If they do, how do they store it and display it?
- → Are there paintings in the classroom? Or the school corridors? Or at home?
- → How are they displayed?
- → The image of the Millennium Wing includes Louis Le Brocquy's The Triumph of Cúchulainn, 2001 (Aubusson Tapestry, 10.21 x 3.5 meters) © the artist, Photo © National Gallery of Ireland

# What will it be like when we get there?

- → What do they think it will be like?
- → Will the rooms be big or small? Will there be lots of people?
- → Bags and coats will either be left on the bus or stored in the cloakroom

## Who will we meet?

- → They will see people on the information desk helping visitors with their queries and the security attendants on the entrance and in each room who provide people with information and ensure no one damages the paintings.
- The person who will show the class around the gallery is called a guide, and they will be able to ask them lots of questions about what they see.

# What will we see?

- → The paintings and sculptures in the gallery come from all over the world and date from the 1300s to the present day. They can tell us about the place where the artist is from, what life was like at that time, what people believed, how they dressed etc.
- → Discuss different mediums painting, sculpture, drawing, print etc
- → Discuss different styles realistic, abstract, impressionist, etc
- → Discuss subject matter landscapes, portraits, history, everyday life, still life etc
- → The images shown on these 2 slides are examples from the collection there is no guarantee that these works will be on display on the day you visit, but similar works can be seen.
- → Slide I: The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife, Daniel Maclise, c. 1854
- → Slide 2 (clockwise from centre): George Bernard Shaw, Prince Paul Troubetzkoy, 1927; View of Powerscourt Waterfall, George Barret, c.1760; Portrait of Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormonde, Steven van

- der Meulen (attributed), c.1560s; Still-life with Dahlias, a Wine Glass and Melon, George Leslie Hunter c.1913; An Interior with Members of a Family, Strickland Lowry (attributed), 1770s
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# How shall we behave?

- → Explain to the class that they are visiting a public gallery and that they need to be well behaved so that other people can enjoy their visit as well.
- → Their behaviour also helps protect the paintings for future generations
- → Ask what rules do they think the Gallery might have? And why?

No running Stay with the group	Stay safe
No shouting Listen to the guide Put up hands to ask questions Turn off mobile phones	Show respect for others
Don't touch the artworks or the frames  No photography  No eating or drinking	Protect the paintings

# Why can't we touch?

- The paintings and sculptures in the gallery are not copies; they are the "real thing" and are very
- → Many of the works of art are very old and delicate
- → They could damage it, and it will be ruined for other visitors coming to the gallery.
- → Discuss fingerprints and how the grease left could build up over time and damage the frame or canvas conservators are employed to clean and repair the paintings, it is a very slow and delicate process
- → So that they can get an idea of how old the works of art are perhaps ask them who the oldest person they know is, and then compare that with the age of one of the paintings.

# What can we do next?

- → Back at the classroom the children could draw a picture or write a poem inspired by their favourite work of art in the gallery. Encourage them to use the work as a starting point for creativity as opposed to 'copying' focusing on the story or the people depicted in the painting for example.
- → They could write a story about their day and the things they saw.
- → To discover more about their favourite artist they could look up a website or do research in the library and maybe do a project on that artist.

# Other suggestions:

- → Download worksheets from the National Gallery of Ireland's website
- → Read the section 'A trip to the National Gallery' and 'Aoife's tale' in Starry Links: Matter of Fact (Fallon)
- Other children's books about visiting galleries include:

  Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliett (age 9-12); Anna's Art Adventure by Bjorn Sortland (age 5-8) and the range of Katie books by James Mayhew (age 4-6)
- → Visit other national gallery websites: <a href="http://www.nga.gov/kids/">http://www.nga.gov/kids/</a> (US) or <a href="http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/">http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/</a> (UK)