

Programming on Opening Night

Family programs, demonstrations, lectures, or entertainment often accompany the opening of professional museum exhibitions. School openings can also be fun and festive events with special activities that compliment the exhibition.

Students will have many ideas for opening night activities. They can brainstorm a list of ideas and select activities to pursue. Criteria for selection may help narrow the list. For example, you may want to choose activities that enhance the educational value of the exhibition, are fun for visitors, and are feasible in terms of planning time and necessary resources. Activities for opening night might include the following:

- Ribbon-cutting ceremony before museum opens (welcoming speech, introduce key contributors, ribbon-cutting)
- Short play performed throughout the evening
- Strolling characters in period costumes
- Musical performances throughout the evening
- Hands-on workshops in a program room
- Ongoing activities such as exhibit tours, orientations, and interpretation activities at each exhibit

Once opening night activities are selected, student-planning committees can be established. Use the *Opening Night Planner Worksheet* as a tool for organizing (*Learning on Display*, chapter 12.)