Top Tour Tips from the Dennos Museum Center Docents

1. Be flexible.
2. Make eye contact.
3. Smile.
4. Remember that you are in charge.
5. Use first names of visitors when asking questions
6. Wear your nametag and introduce yourself as a volunteer.
7. Plan the tour with your group ahead of time
   a. Connect all aspects of the tour to a common, simple theme
   b. Have clear objectives for what you want the students to learn or be able to do as a result of the tour
   c. Have a clear beginning, middle and end to your rotations and for the entire tour
8. Get to the museum at least 30 minutes before the tour starts to prepare (and in case they are early!)
9. Ask Questions.
10. Always refer back to the object and visual clues.
11. Don't talk too much.
12. Plan your tour in "chunks", then if the group is late or something isn't working your can add or take out part of it easily.
13. Don't feel like you have to fit everything in or do everything. Edit down to essential things.
14. Engage and involve chaperones.
15. When you get stuck:
    a. Move on to the next work
    b. Ask about the 5 senses
    c. Pull an activity from your toolkit
    d. Have the visitors pick what work they want to talk about
16. With some groups it is helpful to start a gallery tour by having them look around, this might help them from being distracted.
    a. With younger groups, do a "Mum's the word" tour, by telling the students to be silent and follow you around the gallery looking carefully at what they see. Sometimes give them a specific thing to look for, i.e.: "after we look around, I want you to show me your favorite owl." With high school and adult groups, just giving them a few minutes to explore on their own can help keep people focused once you start your presentation. Or have older groups stand in the middle of the gallery and turn around, then ask their general impressions before starting with your program.
17. Have a clear conclusion and final statement
    a. Ask what the students learned, what their favorite thing was and why, etc.