

Touch to See Club



Welcome

Welcome to Living Paintings Touch to See Clubs service. We thought it would be helpful to provide you with some guidance on how to best to plan for and run a Touch to See club session. Each one of our Touch to See resources contains guidance notes for that particular resource and here we will take you through some more general information that may help your sessions to be successful.

Each person who uses our Touch to See resources with you will be different and have their own needs and so we would expect that your sessions will vary in order to reflect this. There is no right or wrong way to go about using the resources as long as they bring some interest and joy to the participants. Though our resources are designed for visually impaired residents we hope some of your sighted residents might want to join in too; it's a great way for sighted and non-sighted to enjoy an activity and you may find that sighted participants can help those who are visually impaired in the early days as they learn to track and trace the raised images; a great bonding exercise and something that can leave people happy to have a purpose. Also, we have found that our resources can be good for people suffering with dementia. We are happy for our Touch to See resources to be used in any way that will help.

In the Touch to See resource boxes that you receive from us you will find:

- **10** copies of each tactile picture topics; you may only need one and if you need more than 10 let our library know and we will send you more.
- **1** colour image pack containing 10 copies of each topics for everyone to share – sighted and visually impaired.
- **1** CD or USB depending on which you have ordered containing an introduction and audio descriptions that accompany each tactile picture. The scripts for these can be found in the Guidance Notes for you to use if that helps.
- Guidance Notes packed full of useful information

Our resources are loaned to you for three months. You may keep them longer if you let us know and you may send them sooner and receive your next title whenever you like.

Before you start

We recommend that you fully explore the resources in the boxes that we send you. Get to know the audio commentaries; the scripts for these can be found in the box Guidelines if you feel it will be easier for you to deliver this audio exploration and description by reading it yourself at the pace to suit your participants.

Also familiarise yourself with other activities that we may suggest or you may come up with yourself that complement the session. These resources should be seen as a great catalyst for anything from just having chats to trying out some flower arranging.

Planning your Session

The location

Avoid Distractions such as noise. It is best to choose a space where there are no interruptions or distractions. Think about noise levels and people walking through. It takes concentration to follow the audio descriptions.

Sitting comfortably at a table. You will be asking your participants to put the raised images on a flat surface in front of them so that they can track and trace them successfully.

Hearing OK. You will want to place the audio player in the right place so that everyone can hear the descriptions easily, remembering that you may have participants who are hard of hearing. Also, **check your equipment** before you start!

Magnification. Some of your participants may be able to see the actual picture of the topic you are exploring if they have a magnifying glass.

Tea and Biscuits. You may want to turn the session into a bit of a social event and what helps that more than some tea and biscuits! Time to chat!

Get ready for activities. You may want to do an activity in the session; one club asked their local theatre and an actor came along to recite some much loved Shakespeare sonnets, or plan one for another day.

Flexibility. Sessions often go in lots of different directions for instance the Touch to See resource about World War II can stimulate the telling of wartime experiences. That may just mean that you don't finish the resource on that day because sharing those reminiscences may be more valuable to your residents. You can always return to the resources in your next meeting.

Empowerment. Benefit for your residents can be gained by letting them feel that these sessions are their 'club'. Perhaps let them choose the next Touch to See box you will be receiving.

1 or 2 topics? You decide, maybe with your participants, if you want to explore one topic per meeting or all the topics in one go.

Running your Session

You've done your preparation and you are ready to go. Here are some tips that might help:

- Our Touch to See club titles all come with an Audio Introduction. We suggest you play this before you hand out the tactile images. Once they get their hands on those you may find it hard to draw their attention!
- As the Audio Introduction ends stop or pause the audio and hand out the first tactile picture (raised image/thermoform) corresponding A4 printed picture.

Please be aware that sometimes we refer to the tactile pictures as raised images or thermoforms, on the audio guide and printed materials.
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- Check that everyone has their tactile picture on a flat surface ready for touching and the right way up, the number of the tactile picture should be on the top right hand corner. (If tables aren't possible then a tray might do).
- Ask them if can they all hear the audio OK
- Pause or stop the audio as often as necessary, this all depends on how well the members are navigating the tactile picture. Work with the audio commentaries and the tactile pictures at a pace that suits the group members. It doesn't matter how many stops and starts there are. Let them chat amongst themselves about what they are hearing and discovering.
- Keep an eye out for the moment when a tea/coffee/comfort break is a good idea.
- Be prepared to set aside time for discussions, and maybe you will be having a complementary activity. See the **Activities and Discussions** section in these Guidance Notes for ideas and suggestions.

And more – ideas for Activities and Discussions to make your Session even better

We've talked about how you might want to plan and incorporate additional activities into a session, or set up another meeting to do so, using the themes and topics outlined in the Touch to See club titles you're exploring. Here's a few ideas:

Discussion

- Set time aside for discussion, reminiscence and reflection.
- Perhaps have some discussion ideas ready.
- Invite and encourage personal responses from the group members to the themes and topics in the Touch to See club title.

E.g. If your collection was 'Heritage Day Trip' then your members might like to discuss some historical buildings or stately homes that they have visited. They may like to reminisce about their past or about their childhood homes and discuss how domestic dwellings have changed over time both internally and structurally.

Practical Activity

- You could plan a practical activity related to the topics and themes in the Touch to See club title, for example an art and craft activity, tactile object handling or a local visit.

E.g. If your collection was 'A Brush with Royalty' you could organise your own coronation party to celebrate the King's coronation or an up-coming royal event. For this event, your members may like to choose some appropriate music, menu, decorations etc. You may also like to make your own decorations such as flags and bunting and create your own crowns for the event.

If you are inspired by the dresses and accessories in the paintings, create a fabric collage using fabrics such as lace, tulle, velvet and jewel coloured beads.

Speaker

- You might like to invite a local person to come and talk to the group on a theme or topic associated with the Touch to See club title.
- Perhaps they could bring along, or you could organise, some associated tactile objects to share and talk about.

E.g. If your collection was 'Rock 'n' Roll years' you could invite someone to talk about popular culture in the fifties. A local museum might be able to bring some objects such as an old-fashioned radio, portable record player, Sputnik-inspired

magazine racks and pop art posters and talk about how households became much more colourful and interesting after the drabness of WW2. Get the group to draw or paint pictures inspired by the bright colours and bold shapes of the 1950s.

The 1950s was the golden era of musical theatre with films such as *Singin' in the Rain*, *High Society*, *The King and I* and *Guys and Dolls* hitting the big screens. Perhaps a local theatre group is staging their own versions of these shows and they would be willing to come and perform a couple of numbers for the group.

Music and Song

- You could bring to life some of the topics and themes using music and song.
- Either plan to have 1 or 2 pieces of music ready to play, or task the group to raid their music collections and bring in their music to share.
- As a group perhaps create a Playlist of music inspired by the topics and themes using everyone's ideas and suggestions.

E.g. If your collection was 'Come Rain or Shine' you could start the session by listening to popular musical track 'Singing in the Rain' and finish with 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow' from *The Wizard of Oz*. For a more contemporary version you could choose Rihanna's hit song 'Umbrella', and everyone is sure to love 'Here Comes the Sun' by the Beatles.

Literature and Poetry

- Another way to bring to life some of the themes and topics using literature and poetry. Plan to have 1 or 2 pieces ready to recite. Or you could task the group to come up with their ideas.

E.g. If your collection was 'The Blitz' you might like to use some dramatic descriptions of life in London during the Blitz, such as Sarah Waters' 'The Night Watch' and Kate Atkinson's 'Life After Life' to assist with reminiscence.

You could also find some collections of war poetry or try the BBC website which has gathered together the recollections of ordinary people <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/>
They are very moving, in particular 'Poem for Black Saturday' by Len Smith.

When you finish

Most importantly, have fun with the resources. There's no wrong way to use them! If you selected 'Continuous Loans' when you signed up we will automatically send you another title when you have returned your item. If you have not signed up for this, or if you went to specify what you receive next please place your order online:

<https://livingpaintings.org/our-library/bookclubs-for-adults>

Or contacting us on library@livingpaintings.org or 01635 299771