“To be naked is to be deprived of our clothes, and the word implies some of the embarrassment most of us feel in that condition. The word ‘nude,’ on the other hand, carries, in educated usage, no uncomfortable overtone. The vague image it projects into the mind is not of a huddled, defenseless body, but of a balanced, prosperous, and confident body.”

– Kenneth Clark, The Nude, 1956

**QUICK TIPS**

1. **Relax:** Take a “no big deal” attitude about the subject. Your group will follow your lead!

2. **Respect:** Be sensitive to the cultural and religious backgrounds that produced these works and be polite to the interest and questions of your companions.

3. **Remember:** Nudity does not mean the same thing to every culture or every person and people will have different reactions to nudes. All of these feelings are valid.

4. **Revisit:** The more times you have the conversation, the less intimidating it gets!

Most adults who bring children into an art museum dread this question. Some people do not feel equipped to answer the question correctly and others feel uncomfortable addressing nudity in general.

To be honest, this is a question most museum visitors have. This guide is designed to help you have a productive discussion about nudity in an art museum.

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Figures can be nude to show a defining mark or characteristic—or lack thereof! For example, images illustrating stories from the Christian Bible often show the infant Jesus undressed to show that he is a fully human boy although Christians also believe he is the divine son of God.

Sometimes nudity helps to accurately tell a story. For instance, Roman legend says that Romulus and Remus were raised in the wild by a mother wolf. In the context of this story, showing the boys clothed would not make sense so the artist chose to show them nude.

While clothing fashions can change quickly and drastically, the unclothed human body does not. Since the time of Ancient Greece, depicting the nude human body has been considered a marker of artistic skill that lasts the test of time.

Some figures in art are taking a bath or nursing a baby, activities that usually do not require clothing. Rules about dress have also changed over time. In Ancient Greece men exercised nude, so artists represented athletes without clothes.

Regardless of time, race, age, sex, ability, or body modifications, every human has a body. Artists can use nudity as a way to proudly display this aspect of the human condition. **We all have one!**

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