

# Keeping the Learning Going @ Home:



## Virtual Tour Adventures

In this series, specially written for Independent.ie, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), offers some valuable pointers to parents across a range of different learning areas. PDST is a Department of Education and Skills support service.

This article allows children to step into the world of fun and discovery offered by virtual tours and even guides them to creating their own. It is the 12th in the series.

## *Home and Away: Virtual Tour Adventures*

*“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.”* Albert Einstein

Virtual tours are a simple, yet effective means to provide rich learning experiences for children. 360° videos are taken of world museums, galleries, parks and historical sites. Explore the National Gallery of Ireland, The Louvre, The Cliffs of Moher (without getting wet!), step into the Sistine Chapel and gaze at Michelangelo's legendary frescos in the Vatican and even look out for Bród (the president's dog) in Áras an Uachtaráin. Parents and children can move through exhibits at their own pace. These immersive videos record a real-world panorama. Viewers can control the video by scrolling to look in different directions and from different angles which can prove to be highly effective for visual learners.

## Structure and responding to your tour

*Pre-Tour:* Contextualising the activity is the first step in planning a successful virtual tour. Ask your child where in the world they might like to explore. Recount previous visits to museums, parks and holidays abroad to help spark your child's imagination and generate excitement in learning about somewhere new. You could then brainstorm different world landmarks and places of interest where your child might like to explore.

*During the Tour:* Ask questions to elicit children's thoughts, reactions and feelings about their virtual experience. Encourage them to use their senses to describe what they can see and hear.

*Post-Tour:* Provide opportunities for children to respond to the tour. Below are some suggestions in this regard.

**3-2-1 activity:** After children engage with the virtual tour, they can use a pen and paper to draw or write the following details: Three things that they have learned from the experience, Two questions that they still have, One aspect of the virtual tour that they enjoyed.



**Create a presentation:** Children could use paper, chart paper, glue and colouring pencils to create a physical presentation. This could be displayed on the window, fridge or a wall in the house. They could also digitally create a project using digital tools such as Book Creator, Adobe Spark, Google Slides or Microsoft Powerpoint. These are just some examples of presentation apps and websites that could be utilised to collate photographs, edit and present their project.

**Respond creatively:** Children may wish to summarise their virtual tour artistically, perhaps even creating a digital story of their experience thereafter (a process explored in one of our previous articles). The PDST storyboard template can help them to structure their creative piece, available at

[www.tiny.cc/PDSTstoryboard](http://www.tiny.cc/PDSTstoryboard).

### **Is it possible to make your own virtual tour?**

Absolutely! Amongst the many digital tools available here, Google Tour Creator is one that makes it possible for children to create their own virtual tour easily. Limited technical knowledge is required. Children do not need a 360° camera, as Google Street View is used instead.

# Where to go to find virtual tours?

You can access a variety of apps and websites that offer virtual tours at

[www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning/DigitalLibraries](http://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning/DigitalLibraries).

These virtual trips take children to amazing places, without ever having to leave the comfort of their own home. This page of curated content was developed by the PDST Digital Technologies team to support schools and teachers engaged in distance learning in order to provide continuity to pupils/ students.

