

A Conversation about Chagall's Birthday

Visual Arts



Marc Chagall. *Birthday*. 1915
Oil on cardboard. 31 ¾ x 39 ¼" (80.6 x 99.7 cm)

Set up

- Set aside 15-20 minutes
- Find a place where your care partner can see the painting clearly
- Print or have a clear digital display of the document with the painting and the list of questions

Consciously Breathe

- Look your partner in the eyes and say, "Let's breathe together"
- Take three deep inhales and exhales together

Sing and Move

- Sing the song "L-O-V-E" together (See lyrics if needed)
- Begin to make up movements to go with the song
- Invite your partner to mirror your gestures
- Repeat the song without the lyrics (use la-la-la) and enlarge the gestures

Call and Response

- Say the words below and have your partner repeat after each line
- Start by saying, "Repeat after me."
My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a water'd shoot;

*My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.*

(Adapted from *A Birthday* by Christina Rossetti)

Create Together

1. Look at the artwork closely. Look at it from top to bottom, left to right, making sure you explore every corner.
2. Name what you see and describe it. Is there a particular part of the work you are immediately drawn to? What objects do you recognize? How would you describe the colors?
3. You might talk about how the artist worked. How did the artist arrange things on the canvas? Are there parts of the work that are realistic? Are there others parts that are more imaginative?
4. You can give your interpretation. What is the relationship between the two figures? Where do you think they are? What do you think they are doing? How might they feel? What is the mood of the work and what makes you say that?
5. If possible, share historical information about the artist and the work. What, if anything, do you know about Marc Chagall? Here's a little information:
 - a. Chagall once said, "For me a painting is a surface covered with representations of things... in which logic and illustration have no importance."
6. What is Chagall able to communicate about love by abandoning logical representation?
7. See if you notice any connections between the artwork and your own life. Do you relate to the mood of this work? When and how do you like to celebrate the people you love?

Celebrate Each Other

- Positively acknowledge a moment of accomplishment
- Examples: "Dancing and singing with you made me smile;" "The comments you made about the painting was funny/interesting/surprising/etc.;" "I loved saying the poem together."
- Savor the moment