



## HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

10805 Brooklet  
Houston, TX 77099

Dear Educators:

The Houston Gem and Mineral Society invites you to participate in the Kids Day Free Field Trip earth science program held the first day (Friday) of the HGMS Annual Show. In keeping with our status as a not-for-profit, educational organization, we make attending Kids Day completely FREE.

The program is an age-appropriate, TEKS-based scavenger hunt questionnaire that takes the students throughout the show at the Humble Civic Center to various stations, where they ask specific questions as indicated on their scavenger hunts. Teachers and chaperones are given a map showing where the stations are located. Students stay in their group in following the mapped route from station to station at the show. By the end of the "hunt," students will have had a diverse earth science experience that emphasizes visual observation to achieve a cognitive understanding of principles.

Classes bringing more than 20 students can request to receive a mineral or fossil set for continued hands-on learning. All students receive a souvenir rock specimen when they check out of the show (teachers can opt to take the specimens in bulk to distribute once back at school).

To facilitate your field trip experience at the Annual Show, please note the following details concerning the Kids Day program:

- **Preregister so we can reserve a spot for your students:** All students, whether they are attending public/private schools or are home schooled, must request registration for our program so we can print an adequate amount of scavenger hunts and route maps.
- **Register age-appropriate students:** Our activities are geared toward elementary through high school students. Therefore, register only children who are in the appropriate age group (5 yrs to 18 yrs). Community college students can benefit from the 8+ high school program, so we encourage them to register and participate as well.
- **Schedule your group for the right time slot:** We have divided the day so that public and private schools attend in the morning, with the last scheduled arrival at 12:30 PM. Home school students arrive between 1:00 and 3:00 PM. The field trip usually takes at least two hours, but there is so much for kids to do at the show that they may want to stay longer. Depending on your arrival time, you schedule the students' lunch break at your convenience: before, during, or after the scavenger hunt. Bring sack lunches, and keep them on the bus until lunchtime. Opportunities for purchasing food and drinks at the HCC are limited at best. Lunch is picnic style, on the grounds of the HCC.

- **Make arrangements for students' transportation.** Although Kids Day is a free field trip, we do not provide for transportation to and from the Humble Civic Center.
- **Check in with a minimum of fuss:** Have only the lead teacher check in at the west entrance to the Humble Civic Center when arriving at the show. This prevents congestion at the registration table. The lead teacher receives the packet of scavenger hunts and maps for the entire group. All that the children need to bring is a pencil for completing their questionnaire.
- **Understand our policy about free admission for adults:** We suggest a ratio of 5 students per teacher/chaperone for younger children and 8:1 for older ones. Teachers and chaperones are admitted free with their students. Adults in gross excess of these ratios are asked to purchase admission to the show.
- **Have each student bring a sharpened pencil but leave backpacks on the bus:** All students need at Kids Day is a pencil to fill out the scavenger hunt questionnaire we have printed for them. Backpacks are not allowed at the show. Also leave sack lunches on the bus.
- **Practice active learning:** The dealers at our show encourage questions. Many dealers have touch items for students to explore. However, some dealers have expensive specimens and do not allow handling them. Please ask before allowing students to touch items. We thank you for not only chaperoning your students through our diverse earth science experience but also guiding them in how to observe, because the TEKS emphasizes collecting data through observation with the senses.
- **Review our safety precautions:** Running and horseplay are not allowed. Our security personnel will ask that you remove any student creating a disturbance. Any student caught shoplifting will be removed from the show. Police will be onsite to respond to any unlawful behavior.
- **Decide whether children will have shopping time:** Your students are more than welcome to make purchases at the show if that fits your policy and available time. HGMS funds its educational activities—including the free Kids Day field trip opportunity—primarily through our Annual Show. In addition to shopping, games are available in the Youth Section and cost \$0.25 a play.
- **Check out and collect your treasures:** When you are finished at the show, please have the lead teacher check out at the east exit to the civic center. At that time, the lead teacher is given rock specimens for the entire class or grade level attending and any rock sets that were reserved during registration.

The Houston Gem and Mineral Society is devoted to promoting the Earth Sciences in education. We hope that mingling with Earth Science enthusiasts, both professional and hobbyist alike, will encourage more students to continue studying rocks, minerals, fossils, and related Earth Science topics.

We are looking forward to seeing you and your students at the show. HGMS Education Committee