

FIVE STEP GUIDE TO POETRY IN THE PARK



change **X**

WELCOME

“Welcome to the ChangeX Poetry in the Park guide! I’m delighted you’re thinking about starting a Poetry in the Park in your community. Poetry has the power to bring together so many different people, across all ages, races, and abilities.

Here you’ll find all the information, practical tips, and resources you need. There is someone to help you at each stage of the journey so feel free to get in touch!”

Caroline Coyle, Poetry in the Park



Introduction to the Idea

What is Poetry in the Park?

Poetry in the Park is a poetry group that holds monthly meetings in a local park on the first Sunday of every month. It is a free community gathering that invites all those interested in poetry to come along to simply listen to poetry recitals or share a poem or story and celebrate a love of the written or spoken word. The Poetry in the Park idea is inclusive to members of all ages. The poetry can be in any language and everyone is welcome to share their poetry or just come and listen!

Poetry in the Park has two main aims:

- 1) To bring poetry outdoors into various communities to adults and children through a range of actions, mediums, and environments to challenge people’s perceptions about poetry, how it is delivered, and how we relate to it.
- 2) To be inclusive for all ages, races, and abilities.

The background

Poetry in the Park arose out of a concept that artist Rose Finerty had, which was to bring poetry outside into the community as a means of engagement. With this simple

idea, the meetings started in 2013 and evolved into a group of local people, including artists, musicians, writers, and poets.

The original Poetry in the Park group continues with their aim of bringing poetry outdoors into various communities through a range of actions, mediums, and environments. They have found that bringing people together in any art form encourages and enables creativity in many different forms to emerge. Members of Poetry in the Park have collaborated with artists and musicians, recording poetry to the music of the guitar, harp, and flute. Members have published their own poetry collections and poetry in response to paintings. Singers have recorded poems as songs and several music, art, and writing partnerships have emerged out of the Poetry in the Park umbrella group.

STARTING A POETRY IN THE PARK

EVERYTHING YOU NEED

TIME



At the start, you'll need to give about 2- 4 hours per week to get the word out in your community. Once established, you will need to give just a couple of hours each month at the event.

PEOPLE



A small team of approx 5 people.

FUNDING



A small amount of funding is needed for marketing materials and maybe venue and refreshment costs in the winter.

Who typically starts a Poetry in the Park?

Someone who:

- is interested in poetry
- enjoys bringing people in the community together
- is committed to the idea

5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete the 30 Day Challenge
- 2 Connect with your mentor
- 3 Pick a Park
- 4 Pick a start date and let people know
- 5 Enjoy the Poetry!

Support and Additional Resources

Support from ChangeX: Call us at (507)-301-6614. Email: hello@changex.org

Support from your mentor Caroline Coyle, who runs Poetry in the Park groups in Ireland: carolinecoyle1@eircom.net

STEP 1: COMPLETE YOUR 30 DAY CHALLENGE



The 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge has been designed to get your project off to the strongest possible start by building momentum in the first month.

Understand the challenge

Watch the short welcome video on your ChangeX page and read this page.

Learn more about the idea you're starting

Your '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.

Find 5 interested people

You already have your own project page on changex.org. Use it to share the project with others and recruit your first supporters.

Set up a casual kick-off meeting

Host a meeting at your home, in a coffee shop, or in a café and come up with an action plan along with your team. You can use your ChangeX page to set up an event and invite people.

Give us a heads up that you are up and running

At your event, take a team picture and agree to the first step you will take as a group to get started.

STEP 2: CONNECT WITH YOUR MENTOR

Now that you've completed the 30 Day Challenge you should have a few interested people to help you get your Poetry in the Park up and running in your local community.

The next step is to get in touch with your mentor, Caroline, who organizes the two first Poetry in the Park groups in Ireland, in Athlone and Mullingar. She will be on hand to answer any questions you might have and she will give you tips to make sure your group is inclusive and welcoming.

MENTOR DETAILS



Name: Caroline Coyle

Email: carolinecoyle1@eircom.net

Phone: 00 353 851084682

Feel free to get in touch!



STEP 3: PICK A PARK

The next step is to choose the location for your Poetry in the Park group to meet. As it states in the name, the Poetry in the Park group meets in a local park! Choose somewhere easily accessible to all, considering the needs of children, people with mobility issues, and those in a wheelchair. It is a good idea for the location to have a bench or seat available to anyone who might need it. Pick somewhere relatively quiet, like away from a playground, so that everyone can hear the poetry being shared.

If you are starting your group in the wintertime it might be necessary to find an indoor location to begin with, to give some shelter from the cold! Local community halls, schools or places of worship are good (and usually free) places to try.

TIP



Under a tree makes a good spot; the Poetry in the Park events take place outside come rain, hail, or shine, so a little shelter might be appreciated!



STEP 4: PICK A START DATE AND LET PEOPLE KNOW

Pick a date

Now is a good time to pick a date for your first Poetry in the Park event! Once you set the date it is much easier to tell people about it, plus, it gives you a little push to get organized, not that there is all that much to do!

The best option is for the event to take place on the first Sunday of each month at 2PM, so all Poetry in the Park events will be taking place across the country at the same time. However if a different day suits you better, that's your choice. Having a set time each month means people always know when it will be and can make sure to keep the date free in advance.

Let people know that they are welcome to bring poetry of their own to share, or they can share poems written by someone else. They are also very welcome to come along just to listen!

Spread the word

Tell friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues to spread the word with their contacts.

Use your ChangeX.org Poetry in the Park page to invite people (you can share the link through Facebook or Twitter).

Put posters up in local shops, community centers, schools, and places of worship.



STEP 5: ENJOY THE POETRY!

When the date comes around, hope for sun, and enjoy the day! Make sure everyone gets a chance to share a poem if they wish to and feels no pressure if they don't. The first event might not have a large crowd but as word spreads, the size will likely grow.

As the group becomes more established you may chose to pick certain themes each month, but there are no rules for this! If you can't make it to one of the events that's ok, the group can meet without you. The group runs itself now that you have put in the work to get it off the ground.

IDEA



One Poetry in the Park group in Ireland publishes an annual community poetry book made up of contributions from members of the group. You might consider publishing the works from your group like this or in a different way.



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