



POETRY SLAM

Poetry Slams differ significantly from poetry readings, in that Poetry Slams are judged events, where the energy of the performance coupled with the content of the writing are scored to determine who advances to the next round. Poetry Slams are open to community members who register and want to use their voice, creativity, and passion to help end sexual violence in their community and across the nation.

HOST

Select your host carefully. The host should be able to keep the mood light, but be sensitive to the topic. Try to select a host who has a very engaging personality and is able to interact well with the audience.

DJ (optional)

It is very important to have a DJ who understands the delicate balance of keeping the audience entertained. The DJ is not in the forefront. He/She is there to keep the atmosphere creative. The music will vary depending on each event; however, it is widely accepted to play new age/neo soul and/or alternative music. Some poets are comfortable performing to acoustic sounds, but some are not. The DJ must have the ability to read the signs and take cues from the poets and host.

JUDGES

Have an odd number of judges, but not more than 5. One judge should be an audience member. Try to recruit local celebrities such as: community leaders, radio disk jockeys, television hosts/news anchors, local politicians, newspaper reporters/writers/editorialists, magazine reporters/writers/journalists. Provide the judges with meals/snacks and (non-alcoholic) drinks. Obtain a brief biography from each judge and have the host highlight the accomplishments of each judge throughout the event.

PERFORMERS/POETS

Limit the number of performers to create a sense of urgency and call to action. Have the performers prepare a brief biography for the main event. Performers should register beforehand (e.g., online or via email). All poetry performed must be original works of the participant. Each participant is allowed 3 minutes for the performance of their work. Time starts when the poet opens his or her mouth. One poem will be performed per round. Participants may not use props, costumes, musical instruments, or others in the performance of their work. Participants must provide a typed copy of their performance pieces prior to their performance. Works containing explicit or potentially explicit language must be pre-approved prior to performance by the organization sponsoring the event. The full names, nicknames, or other identifiers of victims or perpetrators of sexual violence may not be disclosed, though the participants may disclose if they are a victim/survivor. Participants are required to complete and sign waiver forms so that written/recorded materials can be shared with the NSVRC and possibly published.

TIME KEEPER/SCORE KEEPER

The timekeeper's responsibility is to ensure participants' performances stay within their allotted time. When the participant has 15 seconds left, the timekeeper should raise a sign to alert the participant. The timekeeper may also act as the score keeper. The score keeper quickly tallies the judge's scores and hands them to the host. This individual should be supplied with a stopwatch and calculator.





POETRY SLAM (continued)

THEME

This event is centered on SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH - so creating awareness is the primary goal. Because of the delicate theme of this particular event, it is imperative to have a broad range of topics. You want the audience to be able to laugh, cry, get angry and be inspired! This can be arranged easily by giving contestants a broad range of themes to choose from such as: A tribute to a victim/survivor I know, Healthy relationships, Family, Outrage, Survivor, The law, A man's perspective, Community activism, To My Sons: What would you tell a young man about respect for self, for life, for women?

PRIZES

Obtain 3-5 prize packs. Check with local award shops to see if they will donate 3-5 trophies in exchange for a mention in the program. You may wish to contact your local radio station and ask for a donation of a "prize pack" in exchange for a listing in the program. Also, check with local clothing stores, local hotels, restaurants, and local banks, as they may donate items as prizes.

SPONSORS

You may consider the following businesses/organizations as sponsors: Banks, Restaurants, Bookstores, Colleges

VENUE

Make sure the venue is accessible to people using wheelchairs. You may consider the following locations for your event: College campuses, High Schools, Local restaurants, Libraries, Museums, Coffee Shops, Bookstores

PROGRAM (optional)

The program is a very valuable bartering tool. Advertising in the program is leverage for potential participants and sponsors. You can develop a simple 5x7 program or an 8 x 11 program, depending on the size of your event. List the poets participating in the event, so the audience will know who they can vote as their "favorite". Use business cards for advertisers, they are easy to duplicate and most business cards already have the company logo on them.

ADVERTISING

Press releases should be issued at least two weeks in advance. They should be short and exciting. Compile a list of media outlets and fax the press releases two weeks prior and then again one week prior to your event. Take advantage of free advertising. You may be able to list your event for free on your Community Events Calendar. Check with your local radio and television stations and newspapers to obtain deadlines for submissions. Contact your local media to see if you can partner with them. You may have to buy a small radio schedule, but keep in mind that every radio and television station is required to publicize community events. Ask to see their community service records to determine whether there is a good match. You can trade air-time, by offering to use only one station, give them a booth at your event, let them put up banners and have radio station personalities/"street teams" on site at your event.

