

## **The Guitar Unit**

I took a lot of information from other sources and compiled them into one book that teaches the guitar in a clear and concise manner that coincides with the program I have at Montague Consolidated. The list of resources that I borrowed information from are:

- *Essential Elements for Guitar: Comprehensive Guitar Method (Book 1)* by Will Schmid and Bob Morris
- *Jerry Snyder's Guitar School: A Comprehensive Method for Class and Individual Instruction (Method Book 1)* Published by Alfred Publishing
- *Guitar For Kids: Method & Songbook* by Bob Morris & Jeff Schroedl Published by Hal-Leonard

Unfortunately, I can not put a copy of my compiled guitar workbook up on Steve's Music Room due to copyright laws but I can give you the list of songs, where to find them and some tips on how to go about teaching each section. I can, however, upload the 4 songs that I arranged to be included in the booklet.

## **How it Works**

Before I tell you what is on each page, you need to know how it is set up to work. The program is designed to cater to the individual student. They get a ton of choice when learning through this book and can move at their own pace. The goal in the end is to give them the essential tools they need to learn on their own if they wanted to take it to the next step.

The booklet is divided into two main strands: the Melody/Picking strand and the Chord Progression Strand. There are 9 melodies/skills in the Melody/Picking strand each worth 1 point if played properly. The Chord Progression strand is based on smooth transitions between chords and what type of chord is played. For example, many chords have a 1 finger or easy version that many students will want to begin with. Each chord in this strand is worth 2 points but if the student chooses to use the easy version of a chord, that chord is worth 1 point. If there are 4 different chords in a particular song, that song would be worth a total of 8 points. A student has no obligation to play the full chords but if they want more points they will have to at least attempt them. Also, at any time, a student can go back and get full points for a song if they wish. Finishing the entire booklet would give a student a total of 88 points if using all full chords. There are also half points for bonuses that are not included in the 88 point count. Half points are awarded to students who sing the song and play the chords at the same time. Also, some songs have a particular picking pattern that makes the song more authentic sounding. If a student were to learn the picking pattern they would also be awarded a half point.

There is a bit of a catch. Every student must learn the first 4 melodies in the booklet before they can choose what route they would like to take. After they complete the first 4 they can either keep going with the melodies or move onto the Chord Progression Strand of the booklet.

## How I Teach It

The booklet is set up for individual work. The students should need the teacher very little if they are doing what they are supposed to. The first couple of classes are done as a class. We learn the first 3 notes together making sure to use the right fingers and string numbering system (E,D,C in that order) and the first 2 chords in their easy versions (Easy Em and Easy C.) The first song in the chord progression strand uses C and Em. Usually by the third day of guitar learning they are able to play the easy versions of these chords so I put on the song and we play along with it. Some will want to attempt the full versions and this is definitely OK. Once we have a couple of chords learned and the first three notes I pass out the books and I explain how they are able to work from it without my help. It is set up to be fool proof but some are still fooled by it. There is a picture of where the note is on the staff, where the note is on the guitar using a fret board diagram, a picture of where to put your finger and a written description of where your finger goes for each new note learned. Keep in mind we did a lot of note reading and rhythm practice leading up to this.

Once they start working through the books I go hear individuals to see if they are working through it properly. As they advance and some start getting into the chords, we start to combine the class with learning new chords and talking about common progressions with individual work. By the end of the unit they are able to demonstrate a I-vi-IV-V progression (or similar progression) in the key of G and the key of C using some easy versions where they exist. Some will do this much quicker and smoother than others.

Page by Page: Steve Giddings' Guitar Method

NOTE: all of the note diagrams and pictures are taken from *Essential Elements for Guitar: Comprehensive Guitar Method* and pasted into the appropriate places.

Page 1: Rhythm Warm ups – This is a versatile page of rhythms that have strumming patterns and rhythms to help students read better and can be used for teaching a number of concepts from strumming patterns, picking patterns, muted strums to i m exercises or composition elements. (designed by another teacher and I do not have permission to post. You will have to make your own)

Page 2: Hot Cross Buns – Notes E, D, C (Attached)

Page 3: Marry Had a Little Lamb – New note G (Attached) Can start talking about easy G major here

Page 4: Ode to Joy – New note F (Attached)

Page 5: Wild Stringdom – New note B (Page 14 of *Essential Elements for Guitar: Comprehensive Guitar Method* # 29) Once they pass this one, they are able to make the choice of whether they want to keep going with the melodies or move onto the chords.

Page 6: Rockin' Robin and Yankee Doodle – New Notes A and low G (Page 22 of *Essential Elements for Guitar: Comprehensive Guitar Method* #s 40 and 41)

Page 7: Can You Feel the Love Tonight (Attached) a few new rhythms no new notes

Page 8: Every Breath You Take – New notes fourth string E as well as first string A (Page 74 of *Essential Elements for Guitar: Comprehensive Guitar Method #120*) Mostly rhythm reading practice. Can play song with a partner doing the chord progressions if they like.

Page 9: G Mixolydian scale (Page 21 of *Essential Elements for Guitar: Comprehensive Guitar Method*) – Have them play it up and down smoothly and somewhat quickly.

Chord Progression Strand (anything that wasn't specified as coming from a book is from the internet)

Page 10: Eleanor Rigby by The Beatles – C and Em (Page 13 of *Guitar For Kids: Method and Songbook*)

Page 11: Songbird by Oasis – G and Em

Page 12: Last Kiss by Pearl Jam – G, Em, C, and D (we would have gone over D major before most have gotten here and tried the progression as a class. This is where you can start talking about I-vi-IV-V and similar progressions)

Page 13: Duke of Earl – G, Em, C and D7 (Page 31 of *Essential Elements for Guitar: Comprehensive Method #52*)

Page 14: Sweet Home Alabama by Lynyrd Skynyrd – D, C, G and F (This one has a specific picking pattern that students might want to try for an extra half point)

Page 15: Brown Eyed Girl by Van Morrison – G, C, D, Em (Page 27 of *Guitar For Kids: Method and Songbook*)

Page 16: Wavin' Flag by K'naan – C, Am, F, G (we would have gone over Am and F long before many got here)

Page 17: Let it Be by The Beatles – C, G, Am, F (Page 35 of *Essential Elements for Guitar: Comprehensive Method #62*. Another variation on the I-vi-IV-V progression along with Wavin' Flag and Duke of Earl)

Page 18: Every Breath You Take by Sting – G, Em, C, D, A (Page 52 and 53 of *Guitar For Kids: Method and Songbook*)

Page 19: House of the Rising Sun – Am, C, F, D, E7 (this one has a specific picking pattern that can gain the student an extra half point)

Page 20: Principal Chords in seven keys chart from page 57 of *Jerry Snyder's Guitar School: A Comprehensive Method for Class and Individual Instruction*. This is included in the booklet so that when the student gets to a chord they don't know or can't remember they can refer to this page in the book. Some will have gotten to Am and F before we have gone over it in class so having this at the back of the book is very helpful.

Any questions can be forwarded to me at [steve@stevesmusicroom.com](mailto:steve@stevesmusicroom.com)