

Worship Guitar Workshop

Tips & Resources

Tips for Guitar

THE P-WORD: Practice! There is no substitute. The more you play, the better you will become, and the more you will *want* to play.

NEW STRINGS: A little secret – most guitars owned by most guitar players (especially beginners) are overdue to have their strings changed. You'll be amazed at how much better *you* sound with new strings. Music store employees can help you choose the right strings for your guitar & skill level. You can expect to pay somewhere between \$5 and \$10 per pack.

TUNERS: Tuners are affordable, very easy to use and often include lights, arrows & other cues indicating which way you need to tune the string to get it right on!

METRONOME: Practicing with a metronome is simply the best way to develop your internal sense of tempo and rhythm. With a digital metronome, you can set the tempo and play through the song to an audible 'click'. Try setting it to 95 and play "Thank You For Loving Me" along with it. Here's a very cool online metronome: <http://www.metronomeonline.com/>

SIMPLIFY THE CHORDS: You don't have to play the chord that is written if an easier one will do. For example, if slash-chords intimidate you, just play the left (or "top") of the chord. G/B becomes G, D/F# becomes D, C/E becomes C, etc. And they sound just fine!

SIMPLIFY THE CHORD CHANGES: A song with the chords G - D - Emi - C might sound fine played as G - {G} - Emi - C (without the D chord). Hymns are famous for changing chords on *every beat!* But they can often be played just by playing the chords that are on beats 1 and 3 (if the song's in 4/4) or on beat 1 (if it's in 3/4). Experiment and play what your ear likes!

SIMPLIFY STRUM PATTERNS: If you can't keep a more complicated strum going then just strum one time on the "downbeat" (or the "1") and try to keep a steady beat.

"EARLY" CHORD CHANGES: Prepare the upcoming chord (get your fingers in place) slightly ahead of time so that you can strum it right on the downbeat. This works especially well if you're using the 1-strum pattern mentioned above.

TRANSPOSING: You don't have to play a song in the key that it's written in, especially if it's too high, too low, or too hard for you to play. One of the easiest ways to change the key of a song on the guitar is to use a capo.

USING A CAPO: Attach the capo to the guitar neck and play the original chords. Let's say you place your capo at the 2nd fret. If you were playing a chord shape that normally started at the 2nd fret (say, a D chord), now it will start at the 4th fret. Since a capo acts as your new "nut" or "open string", you just play the D starting at your *new* 2nd fret (2 frets up from the capo).

FIND MORE MUSIC: There are many resources available to find more written music (called "charts") so you can keep expanding your library of worship songs. Here are some resources:

- Email your worship leader, who probably has access to the worship team's library of songs, various songbooks, or online subscriptions that gives access to many, many chord charts and lead sheets. Thanks to your CCLI copyright license (www.ccli.com) – which you **should** look into, if you don't have one - it's legal to share any of those within the context of your church's regular ministry.
- Your favorite artist's web site probably offers the music you need for sale or even for free.

Tips for Worship Leading

EXPLAIN: Explaining what you're about to do sets people at ease, helps them prepare their hearts and invites participation. Saying, "Let's plan to share some prayers of thanks after we sing 'Give Thanks'" lets people prepare their minds and mouths to participate.

GIVE "PERMISSION": Sometimes simply saying, "It's OK to sit or kneel if anyone wants" gives people "permission" to do so. Same goes for closing one's eyes or lifting their hands. It just says, "It's all right to do this" and removes a potential barrier to worship.

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION: More proactive than giving 'permission' but not "telling them what to do," encouraging people to clap or saying, "Let's share some prayers of thanks now" helps people engage in worship with even more of their heart, mind, soul & strength.

OUT-OF-TUNE WHILE WORSHIPING: Don't ignore it (unless everyone is already on their faces repenting)! Here are some options:

1. Stop & tune it. Works well if you just started singing or if everyone's looking at you with pity or pain in their eyes. Make a joke, tune it & move on.
2. Play around it. If your high E string is out, try strumming your chords without hitting the offending string.
3. Sing a cappella. Don't let the guitar stop you, just sing your praise! You can tune it afterward.

BE FLEXIBLE: You don't have to play the song in the order it's written or with the repeats or even the whole song. Sometimes just singing the refrain of a hymn like "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" can be the perfect "Amen" to a time of prayerful intercession.

MEMORIZING: The more you memorize a song, the more you "own" it and can offer it in worship to the Lord. Also, the more comfortable you are with the song, the easier it will be to lead others, vary the song arrangement of the song (the order & number of choruses & verses), or pray during the song. It's harder if you have to put all your concentration on the timing, chord changes or recalling lyrics.

SIGNAL BEFORE TURNING: Giving verbal and, if you're able, musical cues as to where you're going next in the song can help people stay engaged in worship. "Let's sing the 2nd verse again."

UNDERSCORING: "Underscoring" just means playing something quietly during prayer, meditation, sharing or Scripture reading. It is meant to be background to the moment, and it's used to create a sense of smoothness and flow to the worship time, or to encourage a meditative, expectant, prayerful attitude. Here are some of the many options for this:

1. Play the song's introduction (more than once, if you wish!)
2. Play a verse or a chorus
3. Play a chord followed by it's "suspended fourth" chord: G - G4 (also written Gsus4)
4. To play something quietly, try strumming more lightly, strumming once per chord (and letting it ring out after you strum it), or put your pick down and strum with your thumb and fingers.

BIBLICAL MODES OF WORSHIP: Explore the Scriptures to find out how people expressed their worship in ways other than through song, and gradually introduce them to your life and your worship leading.

DON'T TRY TO IMPRESS: As you approach God and as you serve others in this ministry of worship, realize there's no pressure! Take God seriously, but don't take yourself TOO seriously. Be real, be authentic, be yourself. But leave the "God stuff" to God. *He* is impressive!

LIVE A LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP: Be a worshiper of the Most High God in every way you can.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (*1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)*)

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (*Colossians 3:17*)

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men... (*Colossians 3:23*)