

UKULELE MAGIC

TEACHING THE BASICS WITH EASE AND FUN!

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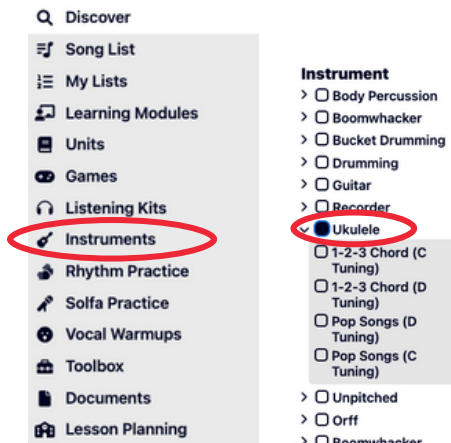
[Link to Slides](#)

What We Will Learn:

- Learn strategies and tips for teaching ukulele in the classroom.
- Explore resources available on MusicPlay Online to enhance ukulele instruction.
- How to set up a "Ukulele Playdate," allowing older students to teach younger ones and engage in hands-on ukulele activities.

Where on Musicplay:

1. Instrument Section
2. Select "Ukulele"
3. Choice of Tuning:
 - 1-2-3 Chord (C Tuning)
 - 1-2-3 Chord (D Tuning)
 - Pop Songs (D Tuning)
 - Pop Songs (C Tuning)



Before You Begin:

What to Buy?

- Sizes of Ukuleles:
 - Soprano
 - Concert
 - Tenor
 - Baritone
 - I use sopranos with Grades 3 and 4, concert with Grades 5 and 6.
- Brands of Ukuleles:
 - Mahalo
 - Kala
 - Diamond Head
 - Lanikai
 - My sopranos are Mahalos (rainbow colors) and concerts are Makala Classic Line from Kala.



Ukulele Storage:

- Large rubbermaid bins.
- Ikea magazine folders on tables.
- Wall mounted racks.
- Ukulele storage carts.

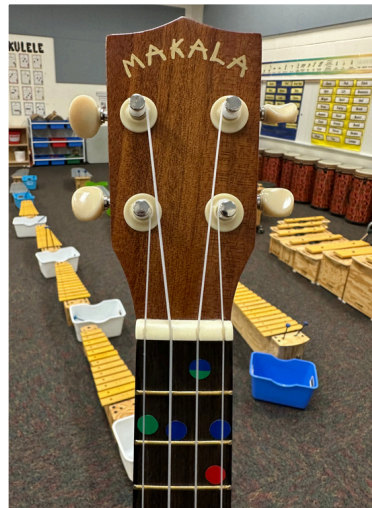


Ukulele Stickers:

- I purchased stickers many years ago (they are no longer available) to help guide the students through the basic chords.
- You can purchase dot stickers.
- Painted dots.

Tuning:

- For Grades 3–5 I do the tuning before class.
- It is helpful to have all ukuleles out of cases and facing the same direction to save time.
- In Grade 6, I teach the students how to tune.
- I still check each ukulele after students tune.



Getting Started:

Ukulele Introduction on Musicplay:

Videos for the following:

- Parts of the Ukulele
- Finger Number Practice
- String Song
- Chord Diagrams for Ukulele
- Tuning the Ukulele
- Ukulele Strumming
- Ukulele String Winder

Supporting Resources:

- Interactive Tuners
- Chord chart posters printables (large and one page)
- Parts of the Ukulele worksheet
- Hold Up Chord Cards

**Introduction to
the Ukulele Link**

Routines and Expectations:

- Assign ukuleles?
- How to distribute ukuleles?
- What should students do after they bring their ukuleles to their spot?
- Resting and ready positions?
- Do not touch the tuning pegs!
- If You Play Before I Say I'll Take Your Ukulele Away!

First Day:

1. Origins of Ukulele
2. How to hold:
 - a. Tuning pegs left, chicken arm with right arm
 - b. Hold against body, not on lap
3. Where and how to strum:
 - a. Strum where the neck meets the body
 - b. Can strum with thumb, thumb and pointer together, or with a pick. (I have a bin of felt picks)
4. Say and students echo parts of the ukulele
5. String number echoes
6. Go through the notes and string numbers. Students improvise on that string for 4 beats.

Finger Numbers:

- Students raise up both hands.
- Wiggle finger 1, 2, 3, then 4.
- Tap finger 1, 2, 3, then 4 on your thumb.

Finger Number Chant:

1-1-1-1, 2-2-2-2, 3-3-3-3, 4-4-4-4

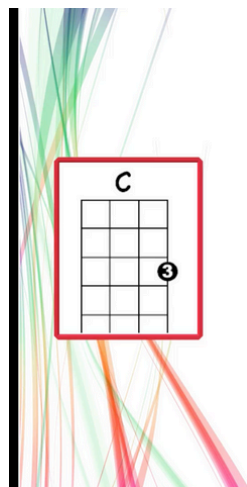
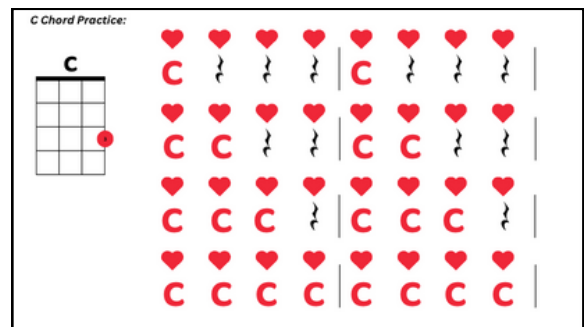
1-1-1, 2-2-2, 3-3-3, 4-4-4

1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4

1, 2, 3, 4

Red C Chord:

- Tap finger 3 on thumb.
- Turn hand around, bring it to the neck of ukulele.
- Open up hand, hide thumb on the back, finger 3 goes on the red dot.
- Strum all the strings top to bottom.
- Students give it a try, you walk around and give feedback.
- Johnny One Hammer – Half the class plays, other half does the movement then switch.
- Little Tommy Tinker – Sing in unison, then as a round.



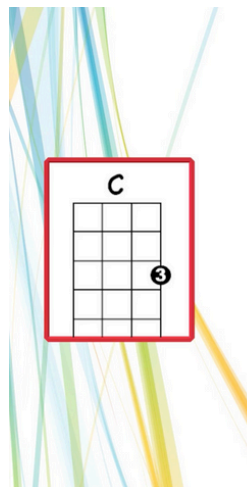
Johnny One Hammer

8 Beat Intro

John - ny plays with one ham - mer, one ham - mer, one ham - mer.
two ham - mers, two ham - mers, two ham - mers.
three ham - mers, three ham - mers, three ham - mers.
four ham - mers, four ham - mers, four ham - mers.
five ham - mers, five ham - mers, five ham - mers.

John - ny plays with one ham - mer, then he plays with two.
two ham - mers, then he plays with three.
three ham - mers, then he plays with four.
four ham - mers, then he plays with five.
five ham - mers, then he takes a rest.

MusicPLAY



Lit - tle Tom - my Tin - ker sat up - on a clink - er.

He be - gan to cry.

Ma! Ma!

Poor lit - tle in - no - cent guy.

MusicPLAY

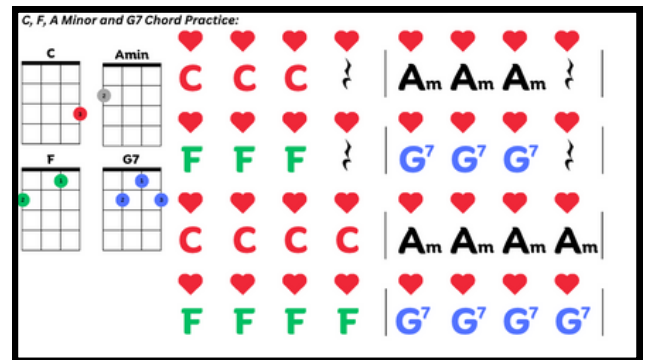
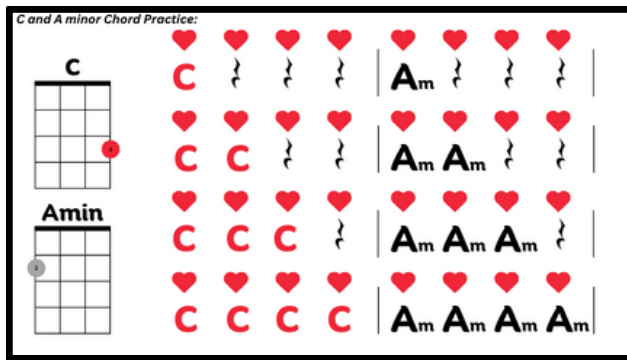
THEMES & VARIATIONS
MusicPLAY
ONLINE

Moving Forward:

Stacy's Chord Sequence:

- Red C
- Red C – C7
- Red C – A minor
- Red C – A minor – Green F
- Red C – A minor – Green F – Blue G7
- Red C – A minor – Green F – Blue G7 – G
- Red C – A minor – Green F – Blue G7 – G – D minor
- Red C – A minor – Green F – Blue G7 – G – D minor – E minor
- Red C – A minor – Green F – Blue G7 – G – D minor – E minor – E7

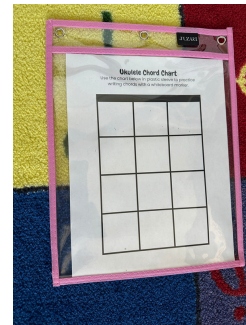
NEW! Sequence of Chord Practice Charts!



Chord Practice Charts Link

Reading and Labelling Chord Charts:

- Use printable, plastic sleeve, and whiteboard marker.
- Label string numbers
- Label notes of strings
- Label frets
- Practice making dots using fret and string numbers.
- Make the chords you are learning to play.



Repertoire on Musicplay:

- 32 songs with 1–2–3 chords. (Available in C and D tuning)
- 60 pop song playalongs (C tuning)
- 8 pop song playalongs (D tuning)

Stacy's Pop Song Playlist:

Link to Google Slides



Strumming Melodies:

- Use one string to start.
- Give the string name, and write out the fret numbers used.
- Present some mystery melodies. Students work in small groups to figure out the song:
 - Hot Cross Buns
 - Starlight
 - Use reading song melodies your students are familiar with.
- Try some simple pop song melodies:
 - We Will Rock You
 - Smoke on the Water

MYSTERY MELODIES #1

Use the G string to play this melody.
The numbers below represent the fret number.
Can you guess the song?

4 - 2 - 0
4 - 2 - 0
0 0 0 0 2 2 2 2
4 - 2 - 0



Assessment and Projects:

Playing Test:

- Select chords you want to assess.
- Display or print out the chord progression so students can practice.
- When students feel ready, they play the chord progression for you.
- Mark based on the rubric provided.
- Give timely feedback.
- Have games, songbooks, or activity for students to do when finished testing.

	4	3	2	1
Posture and Hand Position	Sits tall, holds ukulele correctly, fingers placed with ease.	Mostly correct posture and hand position, minor errors.	Some issues with posture or hand position. Needs reminders.	Posture or hand position makes playing difficult.
Strums evenly and with a steady rhythm.	Strums evenly and with a steady rhythm.	Mostly steady strumming with few mistakes.	Strumming is inconsistent or hesitant.	Strumming is unclear or hard to hear.
Chord Accuracy and Transitions	Plays chords clearly and changes smoothly and on time.	Plays most chords correctly, transitions are mostly smooth.	Plays some correct chords, but transitions are slow or choppy.	Struggles with chords and transitions between them.


Ukulele Compositions:

- These worksheets are available in the ukulele introduction under supporting resources.

Name: _____ Class: _____

Ukulele Composition Template

Write a chord progression on the charts below.
Prepare to play your composition.

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Name: _____ Class: _____

Ukulele Composition Template

1. Select one of the strumming patterns.
2. Write a chord progression on the charts below.
3. Prepare to play your composition.

Strumming Pattern 1: ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ Strumming Pattern 2: ↓ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ Strumming Pattern 3: ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓

My Strumming Pattern:

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Ukulele Playdate:

Getting Organized:

- Let your school community know EARLY that you are planning this opportunity.
- Pair up upper grade classes with lower grade classes.
- Arrange a schedule where the extra class will join in.
- I try to plan it so I am able to give each classroom teacher an extra prep period that week!
- Decide how students will pair up.
- Since I have seating charts, I have students pair up with whoever has the same circle spot.

Playdate #1 – Agenda:

- Introductions
- Play and Sing Along
 - Row, Row, Row Your Boat
 - Johnny One Hammer
- Play a Pop Song for Younger Students
- Teaching
- Younger students play “Johnny One Hammer”
- Play Together – “Ho Hey” (Find on my playlist)

Playdate #1 – Teaching:

- Parts of the Ukulele:
- Head, tuning pegs, neck, body, strings, frets, sound hole, bridge.
- Finger Numbers:
- Go through finger exercise.
- How to Hold and Strum
- Red C Chord
- Songs – Row, Row, Row and Johnny One Hammer
- A Minor
- Switch between A Minor and Red C Chord

Playdate #2 – Agenda:

- Introductions and More Questions
- Play and Sing Along
- Oh My Aunt Came Back
- Play a Pop Song for Younger Students
- Teaching
- Younger students play “Roar” (Find on my playlist)
- Play a music game.

Playdate #2 – Teaching:

- Parts of the Ukulele:
- Head, tuning pegs, neck, body, strings, frets, sound hole, bridge.
- Finger Numbers:
- Go through finger exercise.
- How to Hold and Strum
- Red C Chord
- A Minor
- Switch between A Minor and Red C Chord
- Green F Chord – Can you switch between all the chords?

Looking for More...

- <https://ukeability.org/>
 - You can select the chords you know and it shows playalongs that work for those chords.
- Ukulele Aliens on YouTube:
 - Lots of great practice and pop song playalongs.
- Kulea Ukulele on YouTube:
 - Lots of kid-friendly pop song playalongs.



**Available
on the
Musicplay Store**

Questions?

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- Musicplay Newsletter
- Musicplay Teachers Facebook
- Musicplay YouTube
- Musicplay Instagram

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Register:
<https://workshops.musicplay.ca/courses/sing-dance-play-2025-live-in-st-louis/>