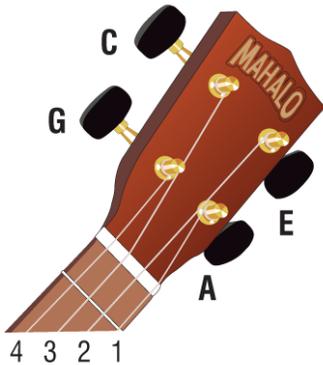


The Prepared Teacher: Basic Ukulele

A prepared, creative teacher is ready to use music and song as a teaching tool whenever the moment feels right. By learning some simple ukulele chords, you can enrich the quality of your classroom’s musical moments, attract students’ attention, and use transition songs to help move from one activity to the next.

**TUNING THE UKULELE**

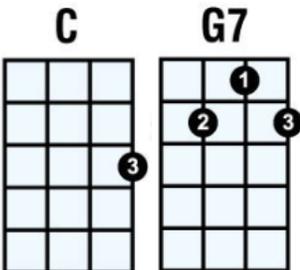


Tuning is essential to making the instrument “sound good”. The strings on the ukulele naturally loosen or tighten from the temperature and humidity of the room (or the children who love to turn the tuning machines.) Tightening a string makes its note higher, and loosening it makes its note lower.

When holding a ukulele, hold the neck in your left hand, and strum the strings with your right hand. The string on the top (closest to you) is G. The order of the tuning pegs starts with G closest to you on top, and goes in a counter clockwise circle as you can see on the left. Tune to the notes G, C, E, and A. You can download a tuner

app on your phone to help you, or use the rainbow bells as reference (G/5 – Light blue, C/1 – Red, E/3—Yellow, A/6 – Dark blue).

**PLAYING CHORDS**



A chord is three or more notes played together. When you strum all the strings of a ukulele or guitar, you are playing a chord! Chords help to support the melody of a song making it sound fuller and richer, and can offer some rhythm to move to as you sing.

You can do a lot with only two chords! Childhood classics like “The More We Get Together,” “Darling Clementine,” “The Wheels on the Bus,” “The Itsy Bitsy Spider,” and many more can be played with very simple accompaniment. The challenge when playing any instrument is to get your fingers used to moving at the right speed. When learning a new instrument, go very slowly and keep practicing. It will get easier to switch your fingering as you play more and more. Try with these two chords on the left: the tonic, or home chord “C major”, and the dominant, or away chord, “G7”.

**COUNTING YOUR FRETS AND FINGERS**



Ukulele and guitar use the same number system to refer to fingers on your left hand. Holding your left hand in front of you, count out your fingers based on the chart to the left. When counting the frets (metal bars) on the neck of the instrument, start from the one closest to tuning pegs and count higher and higher toward the body of the instrument.