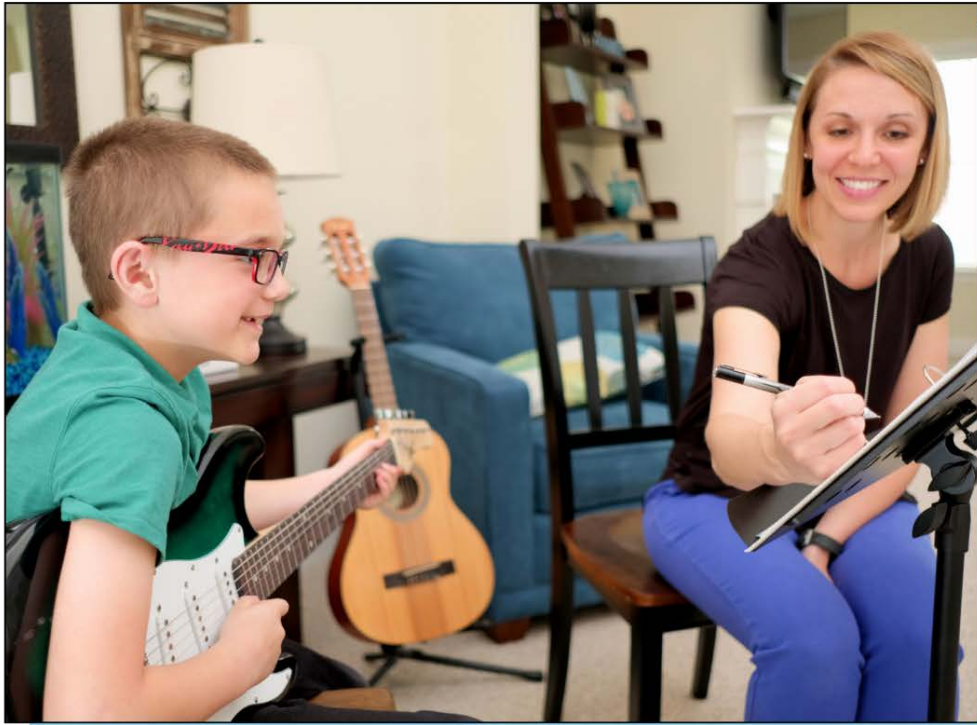




Homeschool Music Curriculum Guitar for All Grade Levels



MME Parent's Guide



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Table of Contents

Before You Begin	2
Introduction.....	3
MME Learning Activities.....	5
Making Assignments and Tracking Progress.....	7
Giving Lessons.....	12
Part I – Melody Activities.....	14
Melody Activity 1: Play the Melody Using the Melody	15
Melody Activity 2: Play the Melody with the Melody and Chords Track	22
Melody Activity 3: Play the Melody with the Chords Track	35
Part II – Chords Activities.....	41
Chords Activity 1: Play the Chords Using the Chords Sheet	42
Chords Activity 2: Play the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track.....	58
Chords Activity 3: Play the Chords with the Melody Track	68
Part III – Singing Activities	73
Singing Activity 1: Sing and Play the Melody	74
Singing Activity 2: Sing Melody & Play Chords Using the Chords Sheet	81

Before You Begin

Getting Started with MME

If you have not already done so, read through our **Getting Started with MME PDF**, which will give you guidance on how to get started with our curriculum. There you'll find helpful advice regarding teaching and learning approaches, as well as information about our instructional documents.



MME First Lessons Guide

The **First Lessons Guide** PDF prepares you to begin your homeschool music lessons. It's easy to follow and requires no previous musical experience, guiding you as you teach Guitar Tablature (TAB) and basic guitar-playing techniques. For most children, it only takes a few lessons to understand the basics, and they can soon begin working with learning activities and practicing songs.

Note: Both the *Getting Started with MME PDF* and the *First Lessons Guide PDF* are available for download in your Members Area at [MakeMusicEasy.com](https://www.makemusiceasy.com)



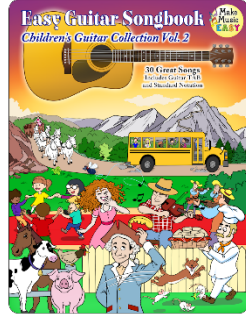
Introduction

Welcome to the **MME Parent's Guide**, a comprehensive resource for homeschool parents who are teaching instrumental music with the guitar. Our guide will show you exactly how to teach with our student-tested approach, providing helpful tips and strategies to ensure success. You can refer to this guide as often as necessary, and you'll have the ability to print off individual sections so you'll have the information readily available while you teach.

Our learning activities described in this guide are based around the songs and sheet music found in your five **MME Guitar Songbooks** that are included with your homeschool music curriculum:



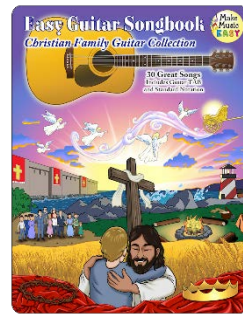
Children's Guitar
Collection Vol. 1



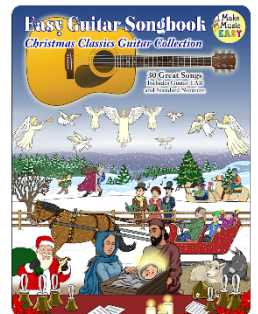
Children's Guitar
Collection Vol. 2



Christian Children's
Guitar Collection



Christian Family
Guitar Collection



Christmas Classics
Guitar Collection

In addition to these guitar songbooks, this guide will introduce other homeschool MME learning tools that are available as PDF downloads at our website. You'll find tools and resources in your member's area at MakeMusicEasy.com

- **Progress Sheets**
- **Practice Schedules**
- **Easy Chord Sheets**
- **Chord Fingering Photo Booklets**
- **And more**

Parent's Guide Audio Examples

Throughout this guide, we include dozens of **MP3 Audio Examples** to clarify certain teaching concepts and strategies. Each handbook audio example corresponds to a specific guitar concept that you'll need to know for teaching, you'll want to listen to each one carefully.

We indicate Audio Examples at various points using images such as this:



As you listen, please be aware that recorded guitar examples will sound faster and more accurate than a beginner is able to play. Nonetheless, they'll still be useful for understanding what each musical concept should ultimately sound like.

Note: *Audio Examples will not play when this PDF is opened in a web browser. You'll need to download this PDF to listen to audio examples.*

MME Learning Activities

Our curriculum uses an **Activity-Based Approach** for learning guitar, where each individual song acts as a vehicle to practice a variety of musical concepts. Each song has eight distinct learning activities in three categories: melody, chords, and singing (optional). This allows your child to work with each individual song at the appropriate skill level and then return to that same song later on for brand new challenges.

Melody Activities

With **Melody Activities** your child will practice the most recognizable part of any song – the melody. The initial focus will be on playing fundamentals such as correct fingering, using a pick, and reading Guitar TAB. Eventually, your child will begin practicing melodies with Play-along Tracks to develop good rhythm and timing.



You'll learn about Melody Activities in Part I of this Guide.

Chords Activities

With **Chords Activities**, your child will learn to provide another important part of any song – the accompaniment. The initial focus will be on learning and strumming chords, and eventually on practicing chords with Play-along Tracks to develop good rhythm.



You'll learn about Chords Activities in Part II of this Guide.

Singing Activities (Optional)

The guitar is widely viewed as one of the best instruments to accompany the singing voice, and for many musicians, guitar and singing go hand-in-hand. That's why we've included **Singing Activities** to complement our guitar activities.



You'll learn about Singing Activities in Part III of this Guide.

Student Skill Progression

Our homeschool curriculum has been designed for a gradual skill development progression for both parent and child. Each song includes learning activities that vary in skill level, such as the following:

Level 1: Building Fundamentals (Beginner Level)

With **Level 1 Activities**, your child will learn basic, but important guitar fundamentals. Please realize that these fundamentals will be gradually developed as your child learns a variety of songs. For example: 5 to 8-year-olds may work only with Level 1 activities for a few years; 9 to 12-year-olds may stay at Level 1 for several months to a couple years; and teenagers may stay at the Level 1 for a couple months to a year. This flexible approach allows each child to move at his or her own pace so that every child can experience success.

**Students can also begin optional Singing Activities while at Level 1.*



Level 2: Play Along-Tracks (Intermediate Level)

Once fully comfortable with Level 1 activities, your child can begin **Level 2 Activities**, practicing songs with Play-along Tracks that give the opportunity to practice right along with the music. With Level 2 activities, Play-along Tracks act like a set of “training wheels” on a bicycle, providing support as your child practices songs and tries to match specific guitar parts. Here’s where your child will begin to develop good timing.



Level 3: Taking off the Training Wheels (Advanced Level)

After feeling comfortable and confident with Level 2 activities, your child will take off the “training wheels” and use the next level of play-along tracks with **Level 3 Activities**. Now your child will begin playing chords and melodies independently, along with background accompaniment. This simulates what it would feel like to play in a real life setting with other musicians.



Making Assignments and Tracking Progress

Progress Sheets

Each song has a **Progress Sheet**, acting as a roadmap for all activities associated with that song. It shows how to make assignments for practice and how to monitor accomplishments. You'll find the Progress Sheet PDFs for all our songs available for download at the Member's Area at MakeMusicEasy.com.

Each Progress Sheet lists the song's learning activities according to the three learning categories: **Melody**, **Chords**, and **Singing** (optional).

The Progress Sheet uses icons to classify these learning activities according to student skill levels. The icons will make it easy for you to target those activities that are developmentally appropriate for your child.



Bingo
~ Progress Sheet ~

Track Your Progress
Check the boxes below to set goals and record achievements.

		Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1 Play the melody using the Melody Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Play the melody with the Melody and Chords Track		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Play the melody with the Chords Track		<input type="checkbox"/>
CHORDS	1 Play the chords using the Chords (or Easy Chords) Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Play the chords with the Melody and Chords Track		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Play the chords with the Melody track		<input type="checkbox"/>
SINGING	1 Sing and play the melody using the Melody Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Sing the melody and play chords using the Chords Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>

Skill Levels: Level 1 Level 2 Level 3

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Skill Levels:



Level 1



Level 2






Level 3

**Remember, your child will work with a lot of songs at each skill level before moving onto the next one. For example, a child might practice 40 or 50 songs with Melody Activity 1 before ever attempting Melody Activity 2.*




Introduction

Looking at the Melody category, you'll see three learning activities – Level 1 (one black guitar); Level 2 (two black guitars); and Level 3 (three black guitars):

MELODY			Practicing	Achieved
	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>		
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

The Progress Sheet helps you and your child monitor overall progress for each song, with columns titled “Practicing” and “Achieved” for each activity. You’ll be able to see exactly what has been accomplished, as well as what still needs to be accomplished, just by glancing at a Progress Sheet.

The **Practicing** column helps you monitor the activities currently being practiced. You'll check off this column for an activity when you assign it for practice.

MELODY			Practicing	Achieved
	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

The **Achieved** column helps you monitor the activities your child has accomplished. Check off this column when you feel that your child has met an activity's Achievement Criteria.

MELODY			Practicing	Achieved
	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		







Achievement Criteria

Each of our learning activities has an Achievement Criteria that your child should complete. You'll learn about each activity's specific Achievement Criteria in **Part I through Part III** of this handbook.

For example, the Achievement Criteria for Melody Activity 1 (*found on page _____*) involves playing the song from start to finish while demonstrating three basic skills: (1) reading Guitar TAB; (2) using the correct fingering; and (3) using a guitar pick.

So if your child can play the song while demonstrating all three skills, Melody Activity 1 can be marked Achieved.



MELODY			Practicing	Achieved
	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>	  	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please be aware that “Achieved” does not have to mean “perfect.” It simply means that your child has completed an activity’s Achievement Criteria to the best of his or her current ability. On the other hand, if your child is unable to meet the Achievement Criteria for a song, it’s not a problem. Just hold off on marking the Achieved column and come back to it later.

Practice Schedules

Now that we've looked at the Progress Sheet, let's take a look at its companion – the **Practice Schedule**. The Practice Schedule is a useful tool that you'll use again and again throughout this curriculum.

Practice Schedule												
Fill in song titles and circle the number(s) to assign learning activities.												
DATE		MELODY			CHORDS			SINGING				
		1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2			
		1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2			

You'll use the Practice Schedule during each lesson to assign activities for your child to practice in preparation for the next lesson. There are several reasons why you'll want to use the Practice Schedule. While giving lessons, it will remind you of what your child has been practicing, so that you'll know exactly what to review – and reviewing previously-learned material is always the first step in a guitar lesson.

In addition, your child can also use the Practice Schedule during each practice session – to see what specific practice activities he or she must work on. This will help keep your child moving in the right direction and practicing independently throughout the week.

Introduction

The Practice Schedule has three main columns which correspond to the same three learning categories found on the Progress Sheet: **Melody, Chords, and Singing**. The Practice Schedule also has a column on the left where you can record the date that assignments are made.

Practice Schedule									
Fill in song titles and circle the number(s) to assign learning activities.									
DATE	MELODY			CHORDS			SINGING		
May 21 2016	ABC Song			ABC Song					
	①	2	3	①	2	3	1	2	

The Practice Schedule is designed to work hand-in-hand with each song's Progress Sheet. Each category column has a blank "song title" box with a set of numbers at the bottom that relate directly to the numbered activities on the Progress Sheet. You should use these two sheets during every lesson in this way: After assigning an activity for a song on its Progress Sheet, you'll then fill in its song title in the box that matches the Practice Schedule category, circling the corresponding activity number and entering the date.

Practice Schedule										
Fill in song titles and circle the number(s) for the goals you are practicing										
DATE	SCALE	MELODY		CHORDS			SINGING			
May 21 2016	ABC Song	ABC Song								
	①	①	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3

Progress Sheet										
Alphabet Song										
SCALE										
1	Play the Practice Patterns using the Scale Sheet								Practicing	Achieved
										✓
MELODY										
1	Play the melody using the Melody Sheet								Practicing	Achieved
2	Play the melody with the Melody and Chords Tracks									✓
3	Play the melody with the Chords Track									✓

You'll find the Practice Schedule PDF in the Member's Area at MakeMusicEasy.com. When used weekly, the Practice Schedule fills up quickly, so we suggest printing several copies at a time.

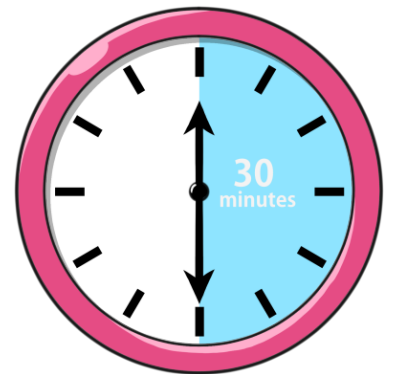
Giving Lessons

Lesson Frequency

We suggest having one lesson per week and sticking with a routine schedule – much like weekly lessons might be with a private music teacher. Choose a regular day and time each week that's convenient for you and fits easily into your homeschool teaching schedule.

Lesson Length

We suggest an average of 30 minutes per lesson; however, the length of lessons may also vary depending upon your child's age and level of interest. If your child is highly enthusiastic or more experienced, you might make the lessons last longer. Or if your child is very young or brand new to guitar, then perhaps 20-minute lessons may be more appropriate.



Student Practice

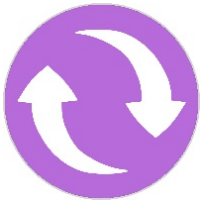
Practice between lessons is important, and the appropriate amount can often depend on a child's age. Homeschool parents have an advantage with setting practice goals, which is much like setting specific study times for other subjects. The amount of practice can vary with child's age; however, we recommend that if your child is younger, you sit with him or her and assist with practice.

Teaching Tips

You can use the following teaching tips during each lesson to help ensure success:



Tune the Guitar: Tune the guitar yourself at the beginning of each lesson. Learning to tune, while important, can be physically difficult for small children. Once your child is ready (and this may not be the case for quite a long time), you can teach him or her how to tune the guitar.



Review Previous Lesson Assignments: The best way to begin a lesson is to have your child play through the previous lesson's assignments, at which time you'll evaluate your child's progress and give helpful advice. Use the Practice Schedule to remind yourself of the previously-assigned activities.



Teach a New Song and/or Learning Activity: An important part of a lesson is teaching something new. This often involves introducing a brand new song. It could also involve returning to a previous song for new learning activities.



Make New Assignments: After teaching a new song and/or teaching new learning activities, you'll assign some practice for the next lesson. Mark the Progress Sheet and Practice Schedule so that you and your child can monitor progress.

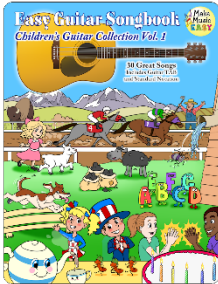


Use Assisted Practicing: With this approach, you'll supervise while your child reviews learning activities, making sure that everything is being practiced correctly. This is especially helpful because it helps show your child how to practice independently.

Part I – Melody Activities

Choosing Songs to Get Started

When starting out with each Melody Activity, choose from the following “easier songs” found in each songbook. Save more challenging songs for later!

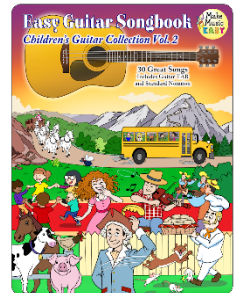


Children's Guitar Collection Vol.1

“Alphabet Song,” “Baa Baa Black Sheep,” “Bingo,” “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow,” “Hush Little Baby,” “Itsy Bitsy Spider,” “Happy Birthday,” “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush,” “London Bridge,” “Mary Had a Little Lamb”

Children's Guitar Collection Vol. 2

“Old MacDonald,” “Rain Rain Go Away,” “Ring Around the Rosie,” “Row Row Row Your Boat,” “The Muffin Man,” “The Farmer in the Dell,” “This Old Man,” “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” “Wheels on the Bus,” “Yankee Doodle”

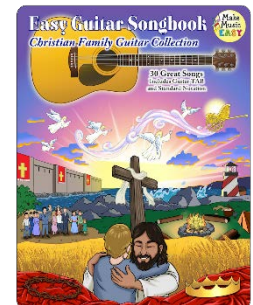


Christian Children's Guitar Collection

“Climb, Climb Up Sunshine Mountain,” “Deep and Wide,” “God is So Good,” “I’ve Got Peace Like a River,” “Jesus Loves Me,” “He’s Got the Whole World in his Hands,” “The B-I-B-L-E,” “This Little Light of Mine”

Christian Family Guitar Collection

“Amazing Grace,” “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee,” “Kum-Ba-Yah,” “Michael Row the Boat Ashore,” “Rejoice in the Lord Always,” “When the Saints Go Marching In,” “Will the Circle Be Unbroken”



Christmas Classic Guitar Collection

“Deck the Halls,” “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,” “Jolly Old St. Nicholas,” “O Come, Little Children,” “Silent Night,” “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” “Up on the Housetop,” “We Three Kings”

Melody Activity 1:

Play the Melody Using the Melody



About Melody Activity 1

With **Melody Activity 1**, your child will learn and practice song melodies to develop three important fundamentals: reading Guitar TAB, using correct fingering, and using a guitar pick.



Prerequisite

The prerequisite for this activity is the satisfactory completion of the First Lessons Guide PDF, to ensure that your child has a solid understanding of Guitar TAB and basic playing techniques.



Student Goals

- Reading Guitar TAB
- Using Correct Fingering
- Using a Pick



Teacher Strategies

- Introducing New Songs
- Note Guiding with Melodies
- Finger Guiding with Melodies
- Correcting Mistakes



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of this activity watch our Melody Activity 1 tutorial in the Member's Area at MakeMusicEasy.com

Part I – Melody Activities

When you assign Melody Activity 1 for practice, remember to check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, on the Practice Schedule, fill in the song title in the Melody column and circle the number 1.

As shown on Progress Sheet

		Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1 Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	
	2 Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3 Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

DATE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
July 25	Mary Had a Little Lamb	Mary Had a Little Lamb	
	① 2 3	1 2 3	1 2

As Shown on Practice Schedule

Achievement Criteria for Melody Activity 1

Melody Activity 1 can be marked **Achieved** for a particular song when your child can play through the entire Melody Sheet while demonstrating these skills: (1) Reading Guitar TAB; (2) Using Correct Fingering; and (3) Using a Pick.

		Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1 Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2 Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3 Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your child will improve with Melody Activity 1 over time while learning new songs.



Student Goals

Student goals for Melody Activity 1 involve reinforcing these fundamentals learned in the MME First Lessons Guide:

- 1) Reading Guitar TAB
- 2) Using Correct Fingering
- 3) Using a Pick

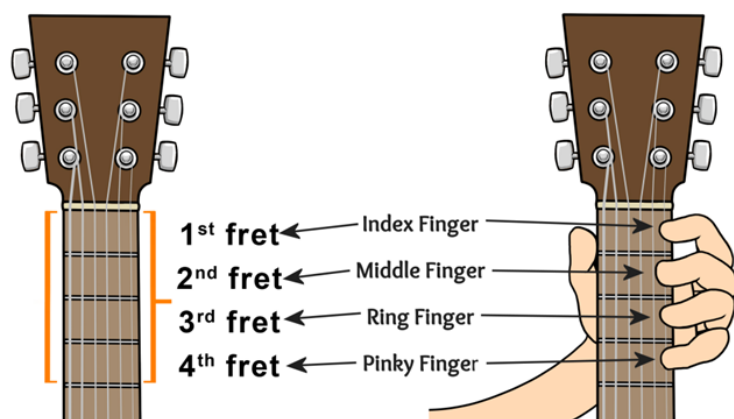
1) Reading Guitar TAB

Melody Activity 1 provides a great way for your child to practice reading Guitar Tablature (TAB). With this activity, your child will read TAB on the Melody Sheet in order to play the melody. In this way, your child will not only be improving playing technique but will also be sharpening TAB reading skills as well.

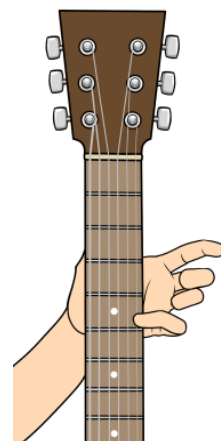
The image shows two staves of music for the song 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'. The top staff is in standard musical notation, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of the notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4. Below the staff are the lyrics: 'Twink-le, twink-le lit-tle star,'. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature (TAB) with six lines. It contains the numbers 0, 0, 3, 3, 0, 0, 3, which correspond to the notes in the melody above. To the right of the staves, there are two blue curly braces. The top brace groups the standard notation and lyrics, and is labeled 'Standard Notation'. The bottom brace groups the guitar TAB, and is labeled 'Guitar TAB'.

2) Using Correct Fingering

In addition to reading Guitar TAB, Melody Activity 1 involves using correct fingering. This means Index Finger for the 1st fret; Middle Finger for the 2nd fret; Ring finger for the 3rd fret; and Pinky Finger for the 4th fret. In rare instances, a song may contain a note on the 5th fret; for that note, your child can use the Pinky Finger.



“Four Fret Box” Visualization

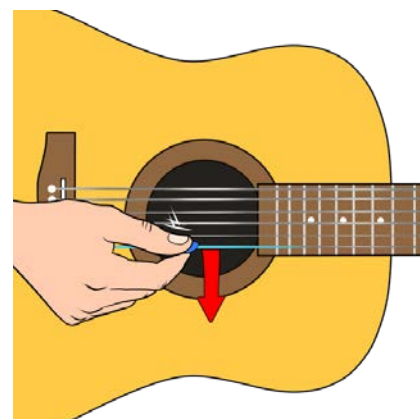


Pinky Finger used for 5th fret notes

When playing notes with Melody Activity 1, allow your child to look down at hands or the guitar as often as necessary in order to ensure accuracy. Using correct and consistent fingering is the most important thing right now.

3) Using a Pick

Melody Activity 1 is a great way for getting practice with the guitar pick. Have your child hold the pick between the thumb and index finger of the dominant hand and use a downward stroke to play a note. Early on, your child may accidentally pluck wrong (or multiple) strings – and this may happen often. This is normal, but with continuous practice, accuracy will improve. It's also normal for a beginner to drop the pick frequently, but with experience, this too will also occur less often.





Teaching Strategies

The following teacher strategies are simple, but will make a positive difference when teaching your child:

- 1) Introducing New Songs
- 2) Note Guiding with Melodies
- 3) Finger Guiding with Melodies
- 4) Correcting Mistakes

1) Introducing New Songs

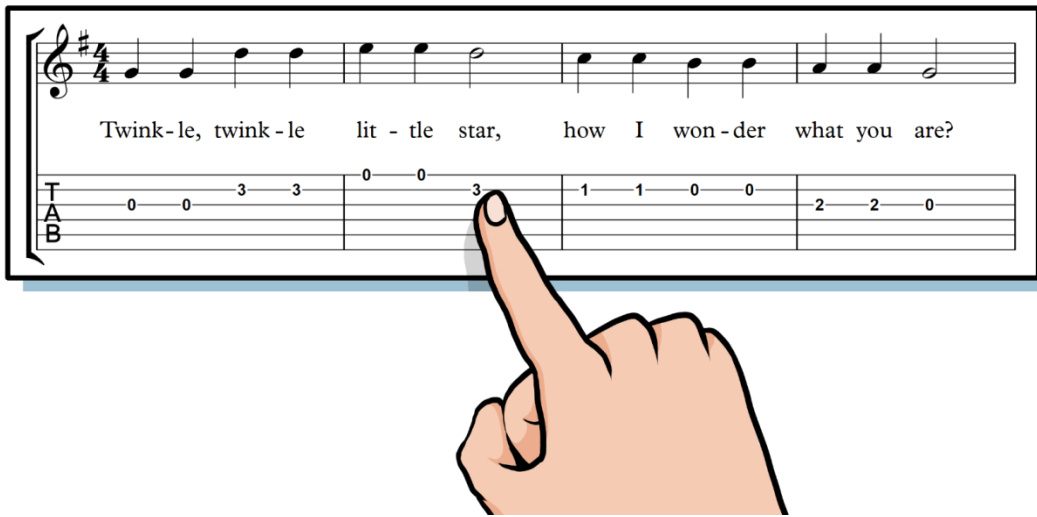
During Melody Activity 1, it's certainly helpful if your child is familiar with a song in terms of how it sounds. And this may be the case because many of our songs are so well-known to kids. However, as your child continues to learn songs, he or she may likely run into new, unfamiliar ones.



Each Song has its own **Melody and Chords Track** that plays the guitar parts your child will someday be practicing. This Track can be used to hear what the guitar parts sound like. As you listen together, you can show your child the music sheet to see how it relates to the music you're hearing.

2) Note Guiding with Melodies

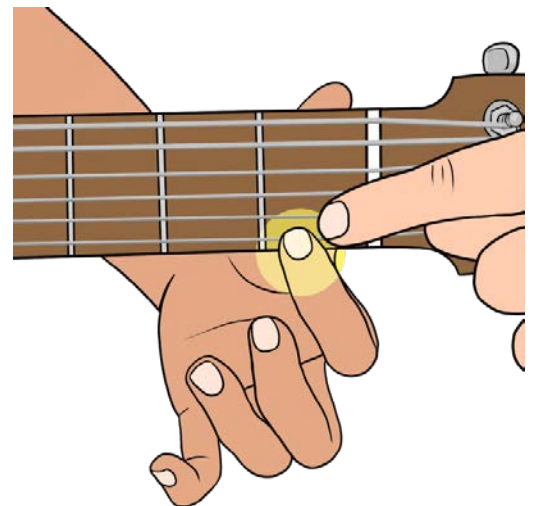
Note Guiding refers to pointing to notes on the music sheet, using your finger (or pencil or pen), right along as your child is practicing. This strategy is especially important with Melody Activity 1 where your child will often be looking back and forth between the sheet music and the guitar. The Note Guiding strategy will help your child “keep track” and avoid “getting lost.” An added benefit of the Note Guiding strategy: *It helps to focus a young child’s attention.*



3) Finger Guiding with Melodies

Finger Guiding is another helpful strategy to use with Melody Activity 1, especially early on. Finger Guiding simply involves pointing to the correct string and fret location to show where to place the finger. It may also be necessary to use your own hands to physically guide your child’s fingers into place.

You can use Finger Guiding whenever your child is confused about which finger to use and where to place it in order to play a note.



Correcting Mistakes

With Melody Activity 1, the most common mistakes involve playing the wrong notes and using the wrong fingers. No big surprise: This is going to happen a lot! Watch your child's fingers closely while playing and take the following actions:

1. Gently correct your child whenever he or she plays a wrong note. *Make sure your child understands what went wrong, correcting the error before moving on.*
2. Gently correct your child whenever he or she uses the wrong finger to play a note, even if the note itself is correct. *The correct fingering is always: Index Finger – 1st fret; Middle Finger – 2nd fret; Ring Finger – 3rd fret; Pinky Finger – 4th fret; Pinky Finger – 5th fret.*

Help your child understand that mistakes are **not** a bad thing. Instead, they provide opportunities to learn from what he or she is doing wrong.

Melody Activity 2:

Play the Melody with the Melody and Chords Track



About Melody Activity 2

With **Melody Activity 2**, your child will begin a new challenge: Play-along Tracks. These Tracks will act as “training wheels” to support your child while learning proper rhythm and timing.



Prerequisite

The prerequisite is Melody Activity 1. Your child should already be comfortable playing melodies with many different songs.



Student Goals

- Playing by Feel
- Playing with the Melody and Chords Track
- Practicing “Saves”



Teacher Strategies

- Locating and Controlling the Play-along Tracks
- Note Guiding with Tracks
- Patience with Play-along Tracks



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of this activity watch our Melody Activity 2 tutorial in the Member’s Area at MakeMusicEasy.com

Part I – Melody Activities

Assigning Melody Activity 2

When you assign Melody Activity 2 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, go to the Practice Schedule and fill in the song title in the Melody column and circle the number 2.

As shown on Progress Sheet

				Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>		✓	✓
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		✓	
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>			

DATE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
July 25	Mary Had a Little Lamb	Mary Had a Little Lamb	
	1 ② 3	1 2 3	1 2

As Shown on Practice Schedule

Achievement Criteria for Melody Activity 2

Melody Activity 2 can be marked **Achieved** when your child can play along with the Melody and Chords Track from start to finish.

			Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your child will improve with Melody Activity 2 over time while learning new songs.



Student Goals

The primary goal of Melody Activity 2 is to play a song's melody along with the Melody and Chords Track. However, before starting to play along with the Track, your child will first need to develop a new skill: "Playing by Feel."

- 1) **Playing by Feel**
- 2) **Playing with the Melody and Chords Track**
- 3) **Practicing "Saves"**

1) Playing by Feel

Your child's first focus for Melody Activity 2 will be **Playing by Feel**. This means your child will keep his or her eyes only on the Melody Sheet and will not look at hands or the guitar while playing melodies. Playing by Feel allows your child to keep the song flowing without any breaks in the music – a critical skill for keeping up with the Tracks.

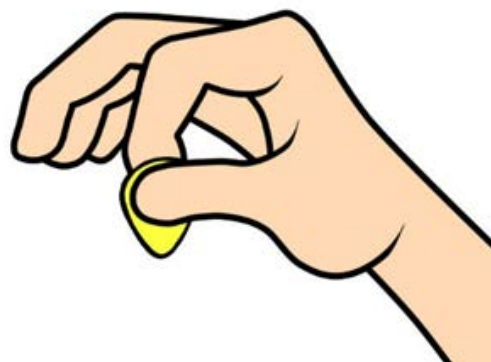
Fortunately, your child has been practicing for this goal all along by using correct and consistent fingering when playing melodies. In fact, after a while, some children begin to Play by Feel instinctively and without any prompting. If your child is Playing by Feel at this point (or just starting to) – then great!

Steps for Playing by Feel

In order to Play by Feel, your child will have to eliminate the need to look at his or her hands while playing. With the following approach, we suggest that your child refrains from looking at the picking hand first and – later on – the fretting hand. However, some may find it easier to do this in the opposite order; that is, they eliminate looking at the fretting hand first and the picking hand second. In other cases, a child may be able to avoid looking at both hands simultaneously. Everyone is different, so be open minded and flexible in finding ways to reach this goal.

➤ *Step 1: Eliminate looking at the picking hand*

Early on, your child may be in the habit of looking at both hands before playing a note, often looking at the fretting hand first in order to press down the correct note and then looking at the picking hand in order to pluck the correct string. For most children, though, the first step to Playing by Feel is to eliminate looking at the picking hand but to continue looking at the fretting hand.

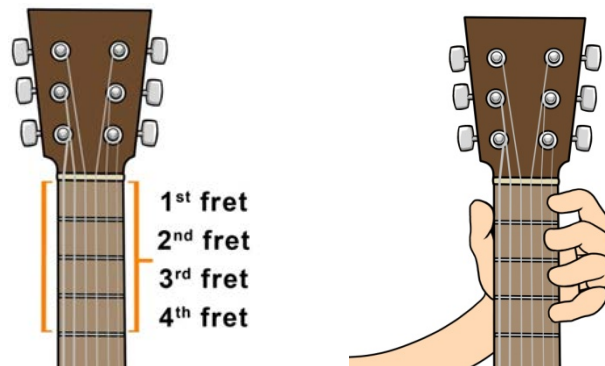


This first step can last for several weeks and can be a new goal. There will be many mistakes along the way, but your child will learn from these, eventually gaining the ability to better "feel" where the correct strings are located for plucking.

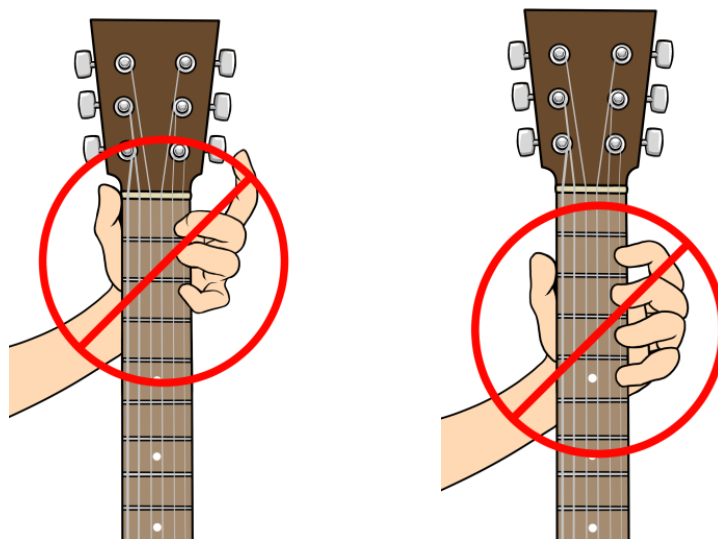
Part I – Melody Activities

➤ **Step 2: Eliminate looking at the fretting hand**

The second step to Playing by Feel is to eliminate looking at the fretting hand. This will be easier to do if using our “four fret box” fingering approach. Remember, your child does not have to physically make this box with the hand; it’s purely a visualization to show the correct fingering.



The most common mistake occurs when the hand shifts away from the “four fret box” and ends up in the wrong position. Be aware of this potential problem. If your child continues to use consistent and accurate fingering and manages to keep the hand in the correct position, Playing by Feel will soon come naturally.



2) Playing the Melody with Melody and Chords Track

When comfortable with Playing by Feel, your child will be ready to try playing along with Melody and Chords Track. As you can imagine, learning to play with Guide Tracks takes time and patience. Be sure to start with shorter, simpler songs – we’ve listed some recommendations on page 14.



The **Melody and Chords Track** is an instrumental recording, containing both the melody and the chords of the song. With Melody Activity 2, the guitar melody on the recording acts as “training wheels” for learning how to play with proper rhythm and timing. When playing along with the Melody and Chords Track, your child will follow the notes using the song’s Melody Sheet while Playing by Feel, attempting to keep up with the Track.

Two-Bar Count In

Each Track begins with a **Two-Bar Count In**. Essentially, this tells the guitarist to get ready to play along with the Track, and it indicates when to begin playing the first notes.

For example, “Alphabet Song” has a Time Signature of 4/4 so each bar is four beats. Listen to the audio example below, and you’ll hear the Two-Bar Count In (four beats each) before the song begins.

Time Signature

A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P,

0 0 2 2 0 3 3 2 2 0 0 0 0 2

T
A
B



When practicing with each Track, the key to starting correctly will be to follow the two-bar Count In. It can sometimes be helpful for both of you to listen to a Track’s Count In once or twice, before attempting to play along with a song.

Pick-up Notes

Sometimes a song has notes that are played during the Two-Bar Count In. These are called **Pick-up Notes**. You must realize that the first bar of a Count In is never displayed on our music sheets. Only the second bar of the Count In is actually visible in our songbooks.

It's in this second bar that you may sometimes hear Pick-up Notes, depending upon the song. Below, you can hear how Pick-up Notes always begin in the second bar of the two-bar Count In. And, once again, you won't actually see the first bar of the Count In – you'll only hear it.

C

She'll be com-in' 'round the moun-tain when she comes.

T
A
B

0 2 1 1 1 1 2 0 2 0 1

Pickup Notes



Audio Example 2

The Count In will always stop right before the first Pick-up Note, in order to help your child properly time the first notes.

3) Practicing “Saves”

It's very common to make mistakes when playing with Guide Tracks. Remember, mistakes are a not a bad thing; in fact, they are a necessary part of the learning process. More importantly, mistakes provide constant opportunities to practice “Saves”.

After making a mistake, your child can stop for a brief moment and then jump right back into the music to perform a *save*. Help your child realize that he or she can't fix the exact spot where the mistake was made – it's already too late for that! Your child needs to stop – for just a brief moment – and then jump back into the *next* bar or musical phrase.

Here's an example of what a *save* might sound like with “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

The image shows a musical score for "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb." Below the melody is a guitar TAB line. The TAB line shows fret numbers: 0, 3, 1, 3, 0, 0, 0, 3, 3, 3, 0, 3, 3. A red circle highlights the first '0' fret, with a red arrow pointing to it and the word "Mistake" in red. A blue circle highlights the '3' fret, with a blue arrow pointing to it and the word "Save" in blue. Above the staff, the chords C, G7, and C are indicated.



The ability to perform *saves* is a skill in itself. The more your child practices them, the easier they will become. Before long, *saves* will become a natural reaction when mistakes occur. Even professional musicians make mistakes, but they know how to “save the situation” and keep right on going.



Teaching Strategies

Your child may need a lot of guidance when first learning to play with Tracks. At first, it will be up to you to control the Tracks and clarify your child's goals. Eventually, your child will be able to do all of this independently, but initially, your assistance will be necessary.

- 1) **Locating and Controlling the Track**
- 2) **Note Guiding with Tracks**
- 3) **Patience with Play-along Tracks**

1) Locating and Controlling the Track

You'll find all Play-along Tracks available for download in your Member's Area at *MakeMusicEasy.com*.

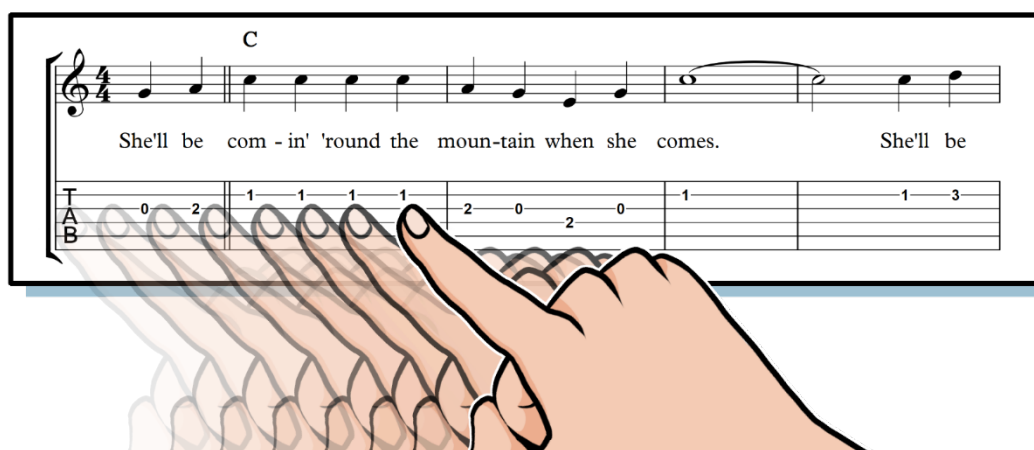
When ready to play along with a song's Melody and Chords Track, you'll need to click on its MP3 file to open it in your computer or device's music player. Try to set the volume so there's a good "mix" between the Play-along Track and the guitar – or in other words, try to make it so that you can easily hear both.



We recommend that you cue up the song yourself and restart when necessary as your child practices along. At first, there will be many stops and restarts when practicing songs, and this is a normal part of the learning process. Eventually your child can become comfortable controlling the Tracks, which will allow for independent practice.

2) Note Guiding with Tracks

When your child begins Melody Activity 2, Note Guiding will once again become useful. This time, you'll use your finger to follow notes right along with the recording to help your child match them while playing. Try to stay "in time" with the music and point to notes exactly when you hear them on the Track. Rather than "jumping" from one note to the next with your finger, we suggest moving it in a smooth motion – moving across the page and "keeping time" with the music.



Try to time your finger with the tempo so that it always points to the right spot on the Melody Sheet, whether or not there is a note. Note Guiding across an area of music where there are no notes played can be just as important since children often make mistakes in these areas.

Part I – Melody Activities

Note Guiding will also help your child perform *saves*. When your child makes a mistake or stops, it will be easier to find a spot to jump back into if you're pointing to the correct notes. The purpose of Play-along Tracks is to help your child “feel” the rhythm and develop timing, so Note Guiding will not be necessary for long. Nonetheless, when first starting to play melodies along with Tracks, this strategy can make all the difference.

Listen to Audio Example 3 once again to see and hear how Note Guiding can help your child make a *save*.

The diagram shows a musical score for the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. Below the staff is a guitar tablature (TAB) line. The lyrics are: "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb." The TAB line shows the fret numbers for each note: 0, 3, 1, 3, 0, 0, 0, 3, 3, 3, 0, 3, 3. A red arrow points to the first '0' fret, labeled "Mistake made here". A blue arrow points to the '3' fret, labeled "Save made here". A hand is shown playing the guitar, with the index finger pointing to the '3' fret.



3) Patience with Play-along Tracks

Practicing with Play-along Tracks can be challenging, and so it's common to feel some frustration. This is a very important topic because frustration is the single biggest reason kids get turned off to a musical instrument. It's important that you know how to deal with your child's frustration, should it occur.

- If your child is exhibiting signs of intense frustration, our advice is "don't push." Instead, pull back. Return to learning activities that your child enjoys. You can always re-visit a Track when your child has developed more confidence.
- Try to help your child understand that mistakes are actually a good thing and are oftentimes the best way to learn. In fact, practicing with Play-along Tracks is all about making mistakes, learning from them, and trying again.
- Help your child understand that success with Play-along Tracks is not "all or nothing." Even if your child can only play a few bars with a Track, that's still an accomplishment in itself and constitutes valuable practice.
- Every song is unique, so the challenge of playing along with the Tracks can vary widely from song to song. If you try a song that's just too difficult, go back to it later.

Melody Activity 3:

Play the Melody with the Chords Track



About Melody Activity 3

With **Melody Activity 3** your child will “take off the training wheels” and begin playing melodies with background accompaniment only.



Prerequisite

The prerequisite is Melody Activity 2. Your child should already be comfortable playing melodies with many different tracks.



Student Goals

- Playing the Melody Chords Track
- Practicing “Saves”



Teaching Strategies

- Locating and Controlling the Track
- Note Guiding with Tracks
- Dealing with Frustration



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of this activity watch our Melody Activity 3 tutorial in the Member’s Area at MakeMusicEasy.com

Part I – Melody Activities

Assigning Melody Activity 3

When you assign Melody Activity 3 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, go to the Practice Schedule and fill in the song title in the Melody column and circle the number 3.

As shown on Progress Sheet

				Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>		✓	✓
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		✓	✓
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		✓	

DATE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
July 28		London Bridge	
	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2

As Shown on Practice Schedule

Achievement Criteria for Melody Activity 3

Melody Activity 3 can be marked **Achieved** when your child can play along with the Melody and Chords Track from start to finish.

				Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>		✓	✓
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		✓	✓
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		✓	✓

As we've said before, Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your child will improve with Melody Activity 3 over time while learning new songs.



Student Goals

Student goals for Melody Activity 3 are similar to those in Melody Activity 2. However, the challenge is greater now since there is no recorded melody to match. Throughout this activity, be sure your child continues to Play by Feel.

- 1) Playing with the Chords Track
- 2) Practicing “Saves”

1) Playing with the Chords Track

The Chords Track includes a song’s chords but not the melody. In other words, this Track functions as background accompaniment only. It “takes off the training wheels,” leaving it up to your child to play the melody all on his or own. Listen to this excerpt of the Chords Track for the song “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.”



Audio Example 4

So, the goal of Melody Activity 3 is to play the song’s melody along with the Chords Track. Here’s what the melody sounds like when accompanying the Chords Track.

	A		D		A			
	For	he's	a	jol - ly	good	fel -	low,	for
	2	2	2	0	2	3	2	2



Audio Example 5

Part I – Melody Activities

Pick-up Notes

Beginning a song that contains Pick-up Notes will be a bit more challenging since there is no recorded melody to match. The two-bar Count In will leave off just before the very first Pick-up Note is played, but the beat will remain to help with timing. When playing along, your child should try to time the first Pick-up Note just as the vocal count leaves off.

Let's look at the beginning of "Amazing Grace," a song with a time signature of $\frac{3}{4}$ (meaning 3 beats per bar). Looking at the Melody Sheet, you'll see that the first note is a Pick-up Note and that it occurs on Beat 3. Notice that the beat where the Pick-up Note begins has been placed in parenthesis, below the TAB staff.

The image shows the beginning of the song "Amazing Grace" in 3/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature circled in red and labeled "Time Signature". The melody starts with a quarter note on C4, followed by a half note on E4, a quarter note on G4, a half note on F4, a quarter note on E4, a half note on D4, and a quarter note on C4. The lyrics "A - maz - ing Grace, how sweet the sound that" are written below the staff. The bottom staff is a TAB staff with fret numbers: 0, 1, 0, 3, 1, 2, 0, 0. The first fret number "0" is circled in red and labeled "Pickup Note".

Listen to the Chords Track for "Amazing Grace" and notice that the two-bar Count In leaves off exactly where the first note should be played.



Audio Example 6

Now listen to the Track with the melody added in; notice that the first guitar note starts exactly where the vocal Count In leaves off.



Audio Example 7

Pick-up Notes can be the biggest challenge with this activity, so if struggling, have your child go back and practice the same song with the Melody and Chords Track to practice the timing.

2) Practicing “Saves”

By now your child should be comfortable practicing *saves*. With Melody Activity 3, this challenge becomes much greater since there is no recorded melody to help your child “get back on track.” However, this is how it would be in a real-life playing situation, so it’s the ultimate goal for *saves*.

Let’s hear how this might sound with the song “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

The image shows a musical score for the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb." The score is divided into three measures. The first measure is in C major, the second in G7, and the third in C major. Below the staff is a tablature line with fret numbers. In the first measure, the fret numbers are 0, 3, 1, 3. In the second measure, the fret numbers are 0, 0, 0, 3. In the third measure, the fret numbers are 0, 3, 3. A red circle highlights the first '0' in the second measure, with a red arrow pointing to it and the word "Mistake" in red. A blue circle highlights the '3' in the second measure, with a blue arrow pointing to it and the word "Save" in blue.



Remember, the ability to perform *saves* is one of the most important skills that a musician can have. Encourage your child to attempt *saves* after making a mistake but remember that this skill takes time to develop. If your child is having difficulty performing *saves* with a song in Melody Activity 3, then return to Melody Activity 2 for more practice with the “training wheels” on.



Teaching Strategies

With Melody Activity 3, you'll use many of the same teaching strategies as Melody Activity 2:

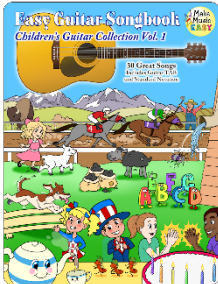
- 1) **Locating and Controlling Tracks**
- 2) **Note Guiding with Tracks**
- 3) **Teacher Mindset**

By now, these teaching strategies should be well established, and hopefully you're comfortable with incorporating them into your lessons. These strategies are just as important for Melody Activity 3, so we recommend reviewing them before teaching this activity. To review these strategies, re-read our **Melody Activity 2 Teacher Strategies**, beginning on page 31 of this guide.

Part II – Chords Activities

Choosing Songs to Get Started

When starting out with each Chord Activity, choose from these easier songs found in each songbook. Save more challenging songs for later!

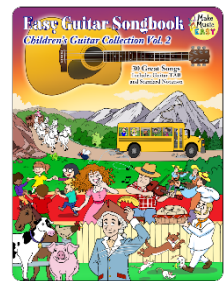


Children's Guitar Collection Vol.1

"Alouette," "Baa Baa Black Sheep," "Hush Little Baby," "Itsy Bitsy Spider," "Head Shoulders Knees and Toes," "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush," "It's Raining, It's Pouring," "London Bridge," "Mary Had a Little Lamb"

Children's Guitar Collection Vol. 2

"Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone," "Oh My Darling Clementine," "Old MacDonald," "Rain Rain Go Away," "Ring Around the Rosie," "Row Row Row Your Boat," "Skip to My Lou," "The Farmer in the Dell," "This Old Man," "Three Blind Mice," "Wheels on the Bus"

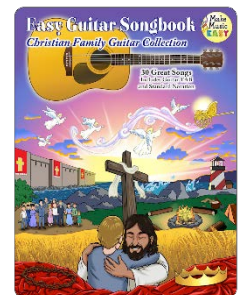


Christian Children's Guitar Collection

"Climb, Climb Up Sunshine Mountain," "Deep and Wide," "God is So Good," "Jesus Loves Me," "He's Got the Whole World in his Hands," "I am a C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N", "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam," "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho," "The B-I-B-L-E," "The Wise Man Built His House Upon a Rock"

Christian Family Guitar Collection

"Down by the Riverside," "Kum-Ba-Yah," "Rejoice in the Lord Always," "Shall We Gather At the River," "The Old Rugged Cross," "This Train is Bound for Glory," "When the Saints Go Marching In," "Will the Circle Be Unbroken"



Christmas Classic Guitar Collection

"Auld Lang Syne," "Deck the Halls," "Go Tell It on the Mountain," "I Saw Three Ships," "Jingle Bells," "Jolly Old St. Nicholas," "O Come, Little Children," "O Christmas Tree," "The First Noel"

Chords Activity 1:

Play the Chords Using the Chords Sheet



About Chords Activity 1

With **Chords Activity 1**, your child will begin to learn chords and practice with songs in your MME songbooks. We've also included kid-sized chords that we call "Easy Chords," which will allow younger children to practice Chords Activity 1.



Prerequisites

The prerequisites for this activity are **Melody Activity 1**. Be sure that your child is already comfortable with reading Guitar TAB and playing melodies before learning chords.



Student Goals

- Learning New Chords
- Strumming and Counting



Teaching Strategies

- Chord Fingering Exercise
- Note Guiding with Chords
- Finger Guiding with Chords
- Correcting Mistakes



Video Tutorials

For visual demonstrations of this activity watch our Chords Activity 1 tutorial in the Member's Area at MakeMusicEasy.com

Part II – Chords Activities

Assigning Chords Activity 1

When you assign Chords Activity 1 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, fill in the song title in the Chords column and circle the number 1 on the Practice Schedule.

As shown on Progress Sheet

			Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1	Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Easy Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	
	2	Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3	Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>		

DATE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
7 / 11	Mary Had a Little Lamb	Mary Had a Little Lamb	Mary Had a Little Lamb
	1 2 3	① 2 3	1 2

As Shown on Practice Schedule

Achievement Criteria for Chords Activity 1

Chords Activity 1 can be marked **Achieved** for a particular song when your child can play through the Chords Sheet by strumming chords while counting.

			Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1	Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Easy Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3	Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>		

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your child will improve with Chords Activity 1 over time while learning new songs.



Student Goals

With Chords Activity 1, your child will begin a new set of goals for learning how to play chords. These skills take time to develop, so be patient.

- 1) Learning Chords
- 2) Strumming and Counting

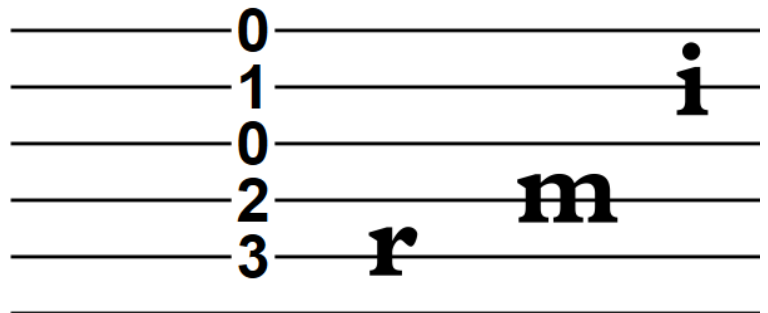
1) Learning Chords

With Chords Activity 1, your child will learn new chords and become familiar with them by playing through our songbooks. Chords are presented in Guitar TAB in our songbooks, and the fingerings are provided in the songbook appendix, as well as in our Chord Video Tutorials and Chord Fingering Booklets.

Chords Consist of multiple notes played together at the same time. The images below show what a C chord looks like in a photograph (and in Guitar TAB).



C chord

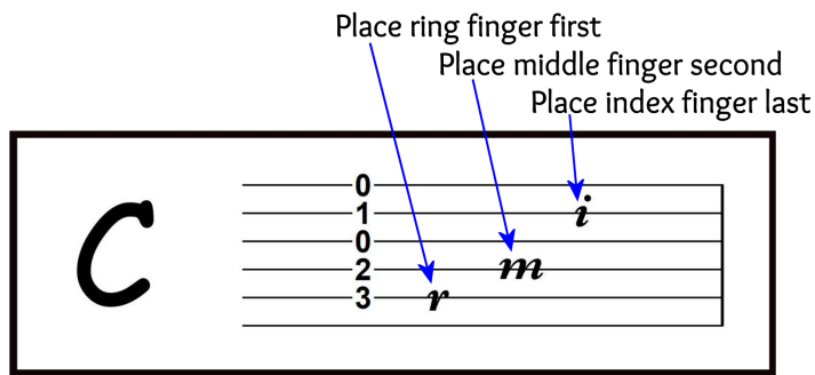


C chord

Part II – Chords Activities

It's this "multiple fingers" configuration that can confuse a child, who may not know where or how to begin building a chord. Therefore, have your child “build chords” – *one note at a time, one finger at a time* – always starting from the thickest string and moving toward the thinnest string.

So for example, when making a **C** chord, the order of finger placement would be ring finger on the 3rd fret; middle finger on the 2nd fret; and then finger index on the 1st fret. This is the same order indicated by the staggered fingering labels on the Chord Fingering Sheet.



**First Note
of C Chord**



**Second note
added to C chord**



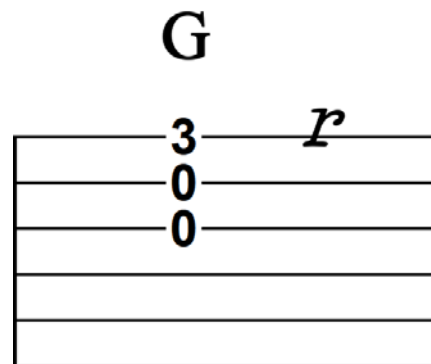
Full C chord

In the future, and with practice, fingers will begin to fall into place all at the same time. However, when first learning chords, your child should use the above approach.

“Easy Chords”

Chords are an important part of playing guitar, but for younger children and those with small hands, they can be a big problem. Fortunately, young children can still learn chords, thanks to “Easy Chords.”

The following images show an “Easy G” Chord Shape in a photo (and in Guitar TAB).



As you can see, an “Easy Chord” is really just a smaller version of a normal guitar chord. For kids, “Easy Chords” are not only easier to play, but also easier to visualize and understand. Thinking about three strings at a time is a lot easier than thinking about four, five, or six strings used in normal-sized chords.

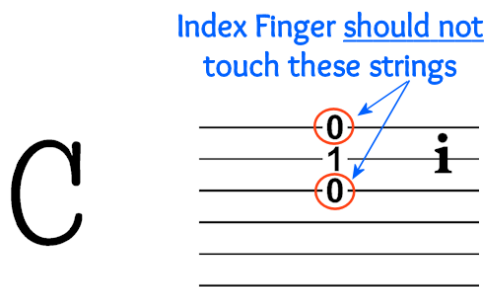
“Easy Chords” are a great substitute for a young child who is not really ready to learn full-size chords. That being said, “Easy Chords” are ultimately meant to be only a stepping stone to playing full-size chords at some point in the future. Eventually, your child will move on to regular-sized chords as he or she grows in age and experience.

Note: This curriculum includes an *Easy Chords Sheet* for every song in your MME songbooks, available at the Members area of MakeMusicEasy.com

Tips for Playing Chords

Using the correct fingerings is the first step, but there are two other key considerations when building a chord: **Arch Fingers** and **Press Firmly**.

- **Arch Fingers** – When teaching chords, you should constantly reinforce the importance of arching fingers. The goal is to keep the fingers arched so that each *fingertip* touches only its respective string.



- **Press Firmly** – Each fretted note of a chord has to be pressed down *firmly* to ring out clearly. A common occurrence is that children don't press down hard enough. If a particular note does not ring out, remind your child to press down harder. Realize that pressing firmly may cause some discomfort for some kids. With time, this discomfort should lessen as the finger tips toughen up.

Chord Fingerings Booklet

Your MME songbooks include an Appendix in the back which provides the fingerings for chord shapes. However, for those learning new chords, our Chord Fingering Booklets are even more helpful because they include large, full color photographs of each chord shape. In addition, we provide several fingering options for certain chords with which a child can experiment.

Regular Chord Fingerings

i = index
m = middle
r = ring
p = pinky

A

Option 1

Option 2

Am

This page from the 'Regular Chord Fingerings' booklet shows two options for the A major chord. Option 1 uses index (i), middle (m), and ring (r) fingers. Option 2 uses middle (m), ring (r), and pinky (p) fingers. The Am chord is shown with index (i), middle (m), and ring (r) fingers. Each diagram includes a musical staff with fret numbers (0, 2, 2, 2, 0) and a photograph of a hand on a guitar neck.

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Easy Chord Fingerings

i = index
m = middle
r = ring
p = pinky

A

Am

A7

This page from the 'Easy Chord Fingerings' booklet shows simplified fingerings for the A major, Am, and A7 chords. The A major chord uses index (i) and middle (m) fingers. The Am chord uses middle (m) and index (i) fingers. The A7 chord uses the index (i) finger. Each diagram includes a musical staff with fret numbers (0, 2, 2, 2, 0) and a photograph of a hand on a guitar neck.

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The **Chord Fingerings Booklet** and **Easy Chord Fingerings Booklet** display the fingerings for every chord you will use in our songbooks. These booklets can be useful when teaching new chords and can serve as a reference tool if your child forgets a chord fingering.

2) Strumming and Counting

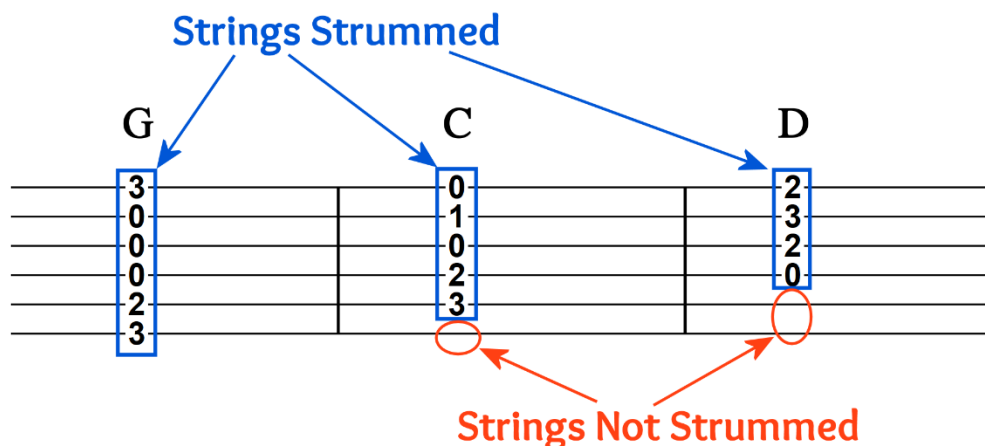
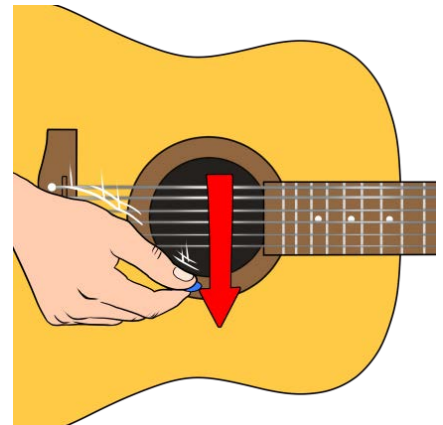
In addition to learning new chords, your child will begin strumming them to play songs and will develop counting skills while strumming. Initially, counting will help your child follow the chords while playing. Later on, counting will help your child follow the beat when playing chords along with Tracks.

And at first, strumming and counting chords will sound very “clunky.” This is because it may take your child some time to switch to the next chord. This is a normal part of the process, and this will also fall into place gradually and over time.

Strumming Chords

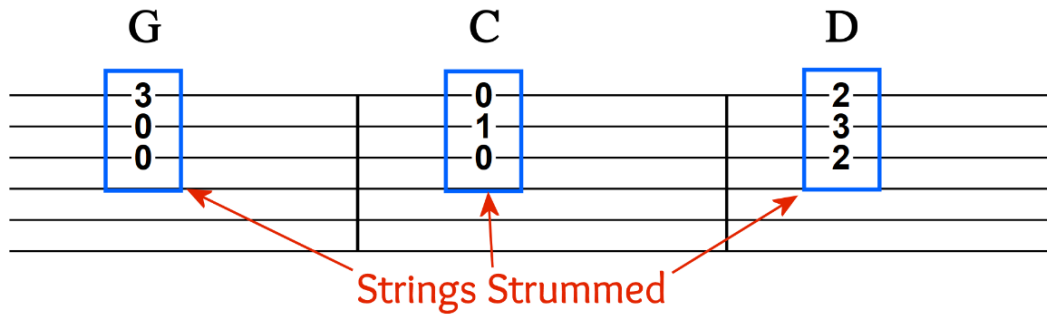
Strumming a chord involves striking multiple strings all at the same time with the guitar pick. Just as with playing melody notes, holding the pick between the thumb and index finger is recommended. And when strumming a chord, always use a *downward* picking motion.

The goal is to strum only the strings that are used for each chord. These strings are indicated in Guitar TAB wherever you see a number on a line. In other words, wherever a number appears on a line, then that string should be strummed.

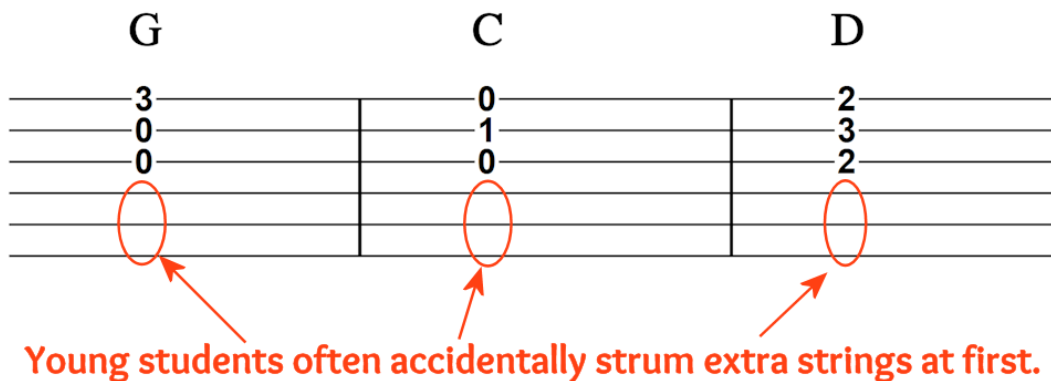


Part II – Chords Activities

With “Easy Chords,” strumming is actually much easier, since almost every “Easy Chord” uses only the top three strings.



That being said, you shouldn't be too surprised if your child accidentally strums extra strings. This is especially common early on, so be patient and continue to offer guidance for strumming the correct the strings.



Some beginners have a tendency to strum the strings very hard with the pick. Help your child understand that this is not necessary and instead to strum the strings more softly. It will produce better sounding chords and help your child feel more relaxed.

Counting

Counting is a useful musical skill that can be developed with Chords Activity 1. For now, counting will help your child follow the Chords Sheet while playing each song. In the future, counting will also help with following the beat while playing chords along with Tracks.

The Chords Sheet makes it easy to know how to count while strumming chords.

Chord Symbols are used to identify chord changes and have been placed above every bar. A **bar** is a segment of music that contains a certain number of **beats** which we have indicated for you by the numbers in the **count**.

These concepts are illustrated in the example below, showing the first line of "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean."

The image displays a musical score for the song "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean." It includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 3/4, which is circled in red. The melody is written on a single staff, and the lyrics are written below it. Chord symbols (D, G, D) are placed above the staff. A bracket labeled "Bar" spans the first three measures. Below the staff, a "Beat" count is provided for each measure: 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3. Blue arrows point from the labels "Chord Symbols", "Bar", "Beats", and "Bar Lines" to their respective elements in the score. The bottom staff shows the fret numbers for the guitar (TAB) for each measure.

You may notice that there are four beats (1, 2, 3, 4) per bar. This is determined by the **time signature**, circled in red in the image above.

Part II – Chords Activities

The **count** is always reflected by a song's time signature. Time signatures are represented by a standard "fraction-type" symbol with a number on the bottom and a number on top.



The **bottom number** gives the note value of each beat (e.g., quarter note, eighth note, etc.). If you're unfamiliar with this concept, don't let that concern you. Understanding note values is not necessary when using our Chords Sheets.

The **top number** of a time signature is what's important for you. It tells you how many beats to count out for each bar of music. And it's the top number which corresponds to the count that we've placed beneath each bar on the Chords Sheet.

Listen to what it sounds like count out two bars of music with these different time signatures:



Count "1 2, 1 2"



Audio Example 9



Count "1 2 3, 1 2 3"



Audio Example 10



Count "1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4"



Audio Example 11



Count "1 2 3 4 5 6, 1 2 3 4 5 6"



Audio Example 12

Part II – Chords Activities

Time signatures might seem confusing at first. We've tried to simplify this concept by placing the beat (corresponding with the top number of the time signature) underneath every bar on each of our Chords Sheets.

G C

O - ver the riv - er and through the woods, to grand-

T 3 0 0 2 3 3

A 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 0 0 0 0 0 0

Beat: 1 2 3 4 5 6

When counting with Chords Activity 1, the goal is to strum the chords to the beat that is labeled beneath each bar. Have your child count out loud so you'll be certain that he or she is counting accurately. Let's see and hear how this is done using "Hush, Little Baby."

"Hush, Little Baby" has a time signature of 4/4, which means there are four beats to count out for each bar. Each bar is labeled with the count "1 2 3 4," making it easy to follow while counting.

C G

Hush, lit - tle ba - by, don't say a word, Pa - pa's

T 0 1 0 2 3 3

A 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 0 0 0 0 0 0

Beat: 1 2 3 4

Part II – Chords Activities

Your child should count the beat out loud while strumming the chord on the corresponding beat number. In “Hush, Little Baby,” the chords to be strummed fall on beats **1** and **3**. Therefore, while counting “**1 2 3 4**” your child will strum the chord at the exact moment he or she says “**1**” and “**3**.”



Audio Example 13

The previous audio example was played “in time,” meaning the count is steady and even. You should expect, though, that your beginner won’t be able to count and strum “in time” for quite a while. When a child is new to playing chords, it takes an extra moment to form a new chord before strumming it. This naturally results in both a delay in timing and in uneven counting.

Here's a more realistic example of how a beginner to guitar might sound when first practicing counting and strumming.



Audio Example 14

If your child sounds this way, just know that this is normal. With more practice, this will get smoother. Eventually, your child will be able to count *and* strum with an even rhythm. This skill will be developed over time by regularly practicing Chords Activity 1 with new songs.



Teaching Strategies

There are several key teaching strategies for Chords Activity 1. Some of these are variations on familiar strategies such as Note Guiding and Fingering Guiding. We'll also introduce a Chord Fingering Exercise that is valuable for learning, memorizing, and practicing new chords.

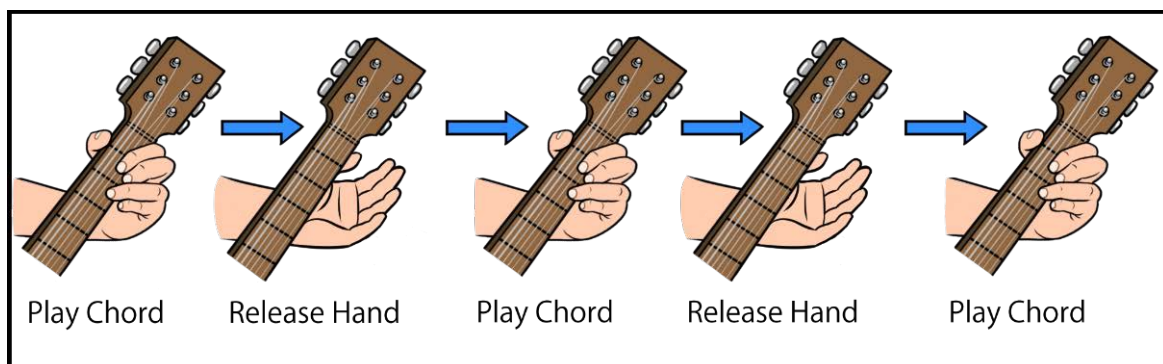
- 1) Chord Fingering Exercise
- 2) Note Guiding with Chords
- 3) Finger Guiding with Chords
- 4) Correcting Mistakes

1) Chord Fingering Exercise

Sometimes in music, the simplest exercises are also the most effective. Here's a great exercise you should use every time you teach a new chord. It will help your child become familiar with a new chord almost immediately.

With this exercise, you'll simply have your child play the chord once and then lift the hand off the fretboard returning to a neutral position. Then repeat this process: Play the chord, then lift the hand up, strum the chord, lift the hand up. Repeat this for a few minutes, and chord fingering will quickly become familiar.

The example below shows how this might look with a **D** chord:



2) Note Guiding with Chords

Note Guiding will also come in handy when your child is learning chords. Early on, your child will likely have to look at the guitar every time a new chord is formed. This makes it easy to lose one's place. By using Note Guiding, you can help your child follow the Chords Sheet.

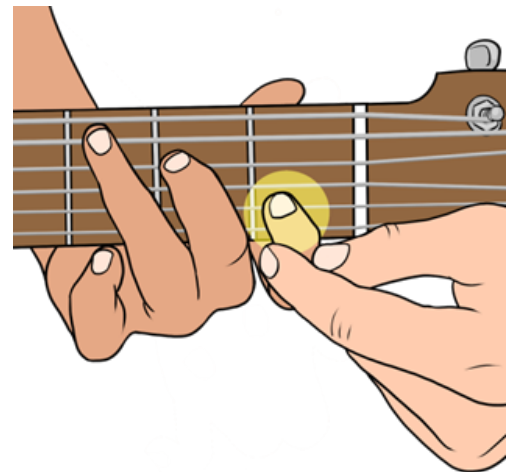
The image shows a musical score for the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 4/4 time. The score is divided into three measures, each with a chord label above it: C, G, and C. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. Below the staff, the lyrics are written: "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb." Below the lyrics, there are three sets of guitar chord diagrams for the C, G, and C chords. Each diagram shows the fret numbers for the Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) staves. A hand is pointing to the beat numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) at the bottom of the score.

Chord	Beat	T	A	B
C	1	0	0	3
	2	0	0	3
	3	0	0	3
	4	0	0	3
G	1	3	0	3
	2	3	0	3
	3	3	0	3
	4	3	0	3
C	1	0	0	3
	2	0	0	3
	3	0	0	3
	4	0	0	3

3) Finger Guiding with Chords

Finger Guiding is especially helpful when teaching chords, which usually requires more than one finger to play. When learning new chords, it's likely your child will need some assistance with the fingering. You can use your hands to physically place your child's fingers into the correct positions, or you can point to the correct locations.

You can use Finger Guiding whenever there's confusion about which finger to use or where a finger should be placed. You can also use it to help your child properly arch the fingers to avoid touching adjacent strings.



4) Correcting Mistakes

Once again, a big part of teaching Chords Activity 1 will be correcting your child's mistakes. Closely watch your child's hands while playing and take the following actions:

- Gently correct your child whenever he or she plays a chord using the wrong notes.
- Gently correct your child whenever he or she plays a chord using the wrong fingering.
- Gently correct your child if he or she is not counting accurately while strumming. *The count is labeled directly beneath each bar of music and lines up directly with the chords to be strummed.*

Remember then first starting out, many chords will probably not sound too great for a while. It takes time to become comfortable with chords. Be patient while teaching and don't worry about perfection – perfection with chords is not realistic for most kids, at least not early in the learning process.

Chords Activity 2:

Play the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track



About Chords Activity 2

With **Chords Activity 2**, your child will begin playing chords along with Play-along Tracks. This time, it will be the recorded chords that will act as the “training wheels” to help with proper rhythm and timing.



Prerequisite

The prerequisite for this activity is **Chords Activity 1**.



Student Goals

- Playing Chords by Feel
- Playing with the Melody and Chords Track
- Practicing “Saves”



Teaching Strategies

- Locating and Controlling the Tracks
- Listening Before Playing Along
- Note Guiding with Tracks
- Patience with Play-along Tracks



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of this activity watch our Chords Activity 2 tutorial in the Member’s Section at MakeMusicEasy.com

Assigning Chords Activity 2

When you assign Chords Activity 2 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, go to the Practice Schedule and fill in the song title in the Chords column and circle the number 2.

As shown on Progress Sheet

		Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1 Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Easy Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2 Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	
	3 Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>		

DATE

MELODY

CHORDS

SINGING

Aug 12				Bingo				
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2

As Shown on Practice Schedule

Achievement Criteria for Chords Activity 2

Chords Activity 2 can be marked **Achieved** when your child can play along with the Melody and Chords Track from start to finish.

		Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1 Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Mini Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2 Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3 Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>		

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your child will improve with Chords Activity 2 over time while learning new songs.



Student Goals

The goals for Chords Activity 2 are similar to those in Melody Activity 2, except that they apply to chords instead of melodies. Your child can use either regular chord shapes or our Easy Chord Sheets. Choose the option that is age or hand-size appropriate.

- 1) **Playing Chords by Feel**
- 2) **Playing along with the Melody and Chords Track**
- 3) **Practicing “Saves”**

1) Playing Chords by Feel

Your child's first focus for Chords Activity 2 will be **Playing by Feel**. Again, this means that your child will keep his or her eyes only on the Chords Sheet and will not look at hands or the guitar while playing melodies. Playing by Feel allows your child to keep the song flowing without any breaks in the music – an important skill for keeping up with the Tracks.

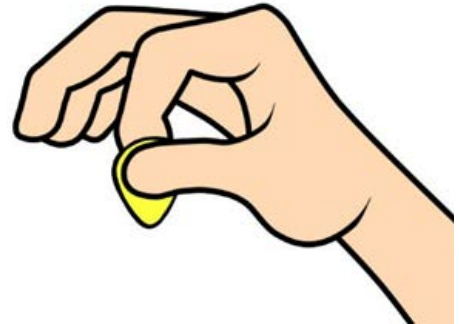
If your child is not yet Playing by Feel but is comfortable with the fundamentals learned in Chords Activity 1, then it's time to start working toward this a goal. Just so you know: The period of learning to Play by Feel can last for quite a while for some children. Usually it takes a few months of practice with playing chords by feel before becoming comfortable with them.

Steps for Playing by Feel

In order to play chords by feel, your child will have to eliminate the need to look at hands when playing. This will be a gradual process for most children, and we recommend eliminating the need to look at each hand, one at a time.

➤ ***Step 1: Eliminate looking at the picking hand***

Early on, your child may be in the habit of looking at both hands before playing a note, often looking at the fretting hand first in order to press down the correct note and then looking at the picking hand in order to pluck the correct string. With chords, the first step to Playing by Feel is to refrain from looking at the picking hand but still allowing your child to look at the fretting hand.



You can expect a period of time where your child will accidentally strum strings that he or she wasn't supposed to. Just as often, your child may miss strings that were supposed to be strummed. It's normal; don't worry about it too much, but do encourage corrections.

Part II – Chords Activities

➤ *Step 2: Eliminate looking at the fretting hand*

The second step to Playing by Feel is to refrain from looking at the fretting hand. Your child will follow and form the chord shapes while keeping eyes only on the Chords Sheet and not on hands or the guitar. Eventually, once chord shapes and names have been memorized, your child can also follow the **Chord Symbols** located above the staff.

Chord Symbols

Hot cross buns! Hot cross buns!

	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T	2	0	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
A	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
B	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	0

Beat: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Chord Symbols are a helpful way to read chord progressions and keep the song flowing “in time.” On the Chords Sheet, a new chord symbol will appear every time there's a chord change. Your child can also use the Guitar TAB to follow the chords; of course, once chord shapes are memorized, songs become easier to follow using Chord Symbols.

2) Playing the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track

When comfortable with playing by feel, your child can move on to the main goal of Chords Activity 2: Playing the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track.

Counting

Counting can be very helpful when playing along with a Track. To begin correctly with the Melody and Chords Track, you can have your child *count along* with the two-bar Count In. Here's an example with the beginning of “This Little Light of Mine.” Your child can count along with the two-bar intro “1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4” and then immediately begin playing the chords.

Hot cross buns! Hot cross buns!

Beat: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



Audio Example 15

In addition, your child can continue to count throughout the entire song if he or she chooses. This approach will help him or her target the beats to strum on.

This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.

Beat: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



Audio Example 16

3) Practicing “Saves”

It's very common to make mistakes when practicing with tracks. We can't say it too often – mistakes are a not a bad thing; in fact, they are a necessary part of the learning process and, more importantly, they provide constant opportunities to practice *saves*.

When making a mistake or getting lost in a song, your child can stop for a brief moment and then jump right back into the music to perform a *save*. Help your child realize that he or she can't fix the exact spot where the mistake was made – it's already too late for that. Your child needs to stop – for just a brief moment – and then jump back into the *next* bar or musical phrase.

Here's an example of what a *save* might sound like, using “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

The image shows a musical score for "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb." Below the staff, there are three measures of guitar tablature for strings T, A, and B. The first measure is for the C chord, the second for the G chord, and the third for the C chord. The first measure of the G chord (beat 1) is circled in red and labeled "Mistake" with a red arrow. The second measure of the C chord (beat 1) is circled in blue and labeled "Save" with a blue arrow. The beats are numbered 1 through 4 for each measure.



Remind your child that the ability to perform *saves* is an important skill in itself. The more your child practices them, the easier they will become and before long, *saves* will become a natural reaction when mistakes occur.



Teaching Strategies

The teaching strategies for Chords Activity 2 are similar to those in Melody Activity 2, except this time with chords instead of melodies.

- 1) **Locating and Controlling the Track**
- 2) **Listening Before Playing**
- 3) **Note Guiding with the Track**
- 4) **Patience with Play-along Tracks**

1) Locating and Controlling the Track

You'll find all Play-along Tracks available for download in your Member's Area at MakeMusicEasy.com

When ready to play along with a song's Melody and Chords Track, you'll need to click on its MP3 file to open it in your computer or device's music player. Try to set the volume so there is a good "mix" between the Play-along Track and the guitar – or in other words, try to make it so that you can easily hear both.



We recommend that you cue up the song yourself and restart when necessary as your child practices along. There will be many stops and restarts when practicing songs at first – this is a normal part of the learning process. Eventually, your child should become comfortable controlling the Tracks on his or her own, which will allow for independent practice.

2) Listening Before Playing Along

Listening to the Melody and Chords Track before beginning to play along can be beneficial. Have your child listen to the Track while looking at the Chords Sheet. This will help your child make a visual connection with the music on the page. In this way, it becomes easier to hear and see the timing of the notes.

While listening to the Melody and Chords Track, your child's ear will naturally be drawn to the melody. Instead, encourage him or her to listen specifically to the chords. For example, if you listen to the song "Baa Baa Black Sheep," you can hear the chords in the background.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Baa Baa Black Sheep" in 2/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Baa, baa, black sheep have you an - y wool?". Above the staff, the chords G, C, and G are indicated. Below the staff, the guitar chords are written for Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) staves. The bass line is marked with "Beat: 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2".

Beat	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
T	3	0	3	0	0	1	3	0
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	3



Audio Example 18

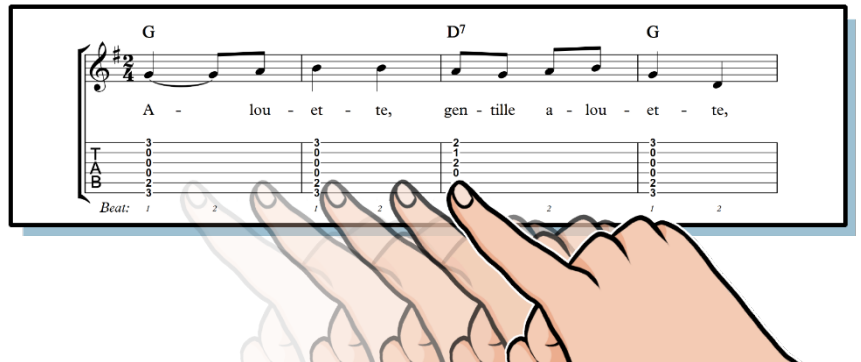
If your child is still having a hard time discerning the chords, you may also consider letting him or her hear the song's Chords Track. This Track doesn't contain the melody, allowing the chords to be heard very clearly. So while this Track is not specifically designed for Chords Activity 2, it may still be useful for listening purposes.



Audio Example 19

3) Note Guiding with the Track

Note Guiding has been a valuable strategy every step of the way, and right here is no exception. For Note Guiding, use your finger and follow the chords along with the recording



g. Be sure to stay in time with the music and point to the chords at the exact time you hear them on the Track.

Note Guiding will also help your child performs *saves*. If your child makes a mistake, it will be easier to find a spot to jump back into, especially if you (the teacher) point to the notes. The purpose of Play-along Tracks is to “feel” the rhythm and develop timing, so Note Guiding will not be necessary for long. But when first starting to play chords with Tracks, this little bit of assistance can make a big difference.

5) Patience with Play-along Tracks

Playing chords along with Tracks is a new challenge. For this reason, some children will experience difficulty keeping up and some may feel a bit of frustration. This is something you should expect, and it can require patience on your part.

But if your child is exhibiting signs of intense frustration, our advice is "don't push." Instead, pull back. Just continue to practice with Chords Activity 1 with more songs. Re-visit Play-along Tracks when your child has developed more experience and confidence with playing chords.

Chords Activity 3:

Play the Chords with the Melody Track



About Chords Activity 3

With **Chords Activity 3** your child will “take off the training wheels” and begin playing chords on his or her own. The Melody Track does not include recorded chords, leaving it up to your child to provide accompaniment for the melody.



Prerequisite

The prerequisite for this activity is **Chords Activity 2**. Your child should already be comfortable playing chords with many different tracks.



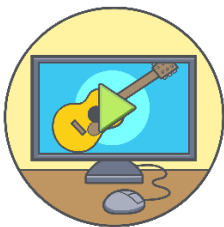
Student Goals

- Playing the Chords with the Melody Track
- Practicing “Saves”



Teaching Strategies

- Locating and Controlling the Track
- Note Guiding with Tracks
- Patience with Play-along Tracks



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of this activity watch our Chords Activity 3 tutorial in the Member’s Area at [MakeMusicEasy.com](https://www.makemusiceasy.com)

Part II – Chords Activities

Assigning Chords Activity 3

When you assign Chords Activity 3 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, go to the Practice Schedule and fill in the song title in the Chords column and circle the number 3.

As shown on Progress Sheet

			Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1	Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Easy Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3	Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>	✓	

DATE	MELODY			CHORDS			SINGING	
Aug 25				Alouette				
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2

As Shown on Practice Schedule

Achievement Criteria for Chords Activity 3

Chords Activity 3 can be marked **Achieved** when your child can play along with the Melody Track from start to finish.

			Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1	Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Easy Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3	Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>	✓	✓

Once again, Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your child will improve with Chords Activity 3 over time while learning new songs.



Student Goals

Student goals for Chords Activity 3 are similar to those in Melody Activity 3:

- 1) Play the chords with the Melody Track
- 2) Practicing “Saves”

1) Play the Chords with the Melody Track

Chords Activity 3 introduces the **Melody Track**, which does not include the song’s chords; it provides only the recorded melody. The Melody Track takes off the training wheels, so to speak, leaving it completely up to your child to fill in the chords.

First, listen to what the Melody Track sounds like, using “The Star-Spangled Banner” as an example.



Notice how you can clearly hear the melody, but the Track sounds very “empty” since no chords are being played. It will be up to your child to fill in this “empty space” by playing the chords. Next, listen to what this would sound like with the chords added back in.

Chords: C, Am, G

Lyrics: Oh say can you see by the dawn's early light, what so

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3



2) Practicing “Saves”

By now your child should be very comfortable practicing “saves” when playing along with tracks with Chords Activity 2. With Chords Activity 3, the challenge is greater since there are no recorded chords on the Melody Track to help your child “get back on track.” Since this is how it would be in a real-life playing situation, it’s the ultimate goal for practicing “saves.”

Let’s hear how this might sound.

The image shows a musical score for 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' in 4/4 time. The melody is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: 'Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb.' Below the melody are four systems of guitar chords for Tenor (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) positions. The first system (beats 1-4) is for a C major chord. The second system (beats 1-4) is for a G major chord. The third system (beats 1-4) is for a C major chord. The fourth system (beats 1-4) is for a C major chord. A red circle highlights the first beat of the second system (G chord), with an arrow pointing to it and the word 'Mistake' in red. A blue circle highlights the first beat of the fourth system (C chord), with an arrow pointing to it and the word 'Save' in blue.



Remember, performing *saves* is one of the most important skills that a musician can have. Encourage your child to attempt *saves* after making mistakes but realize that this skill does takes time to develop. If your child is having difficulty performing *saves* with a song for Chords Activity 3, then return to Chords Activity 2 for more practice with the “training wheels” on.



Teaching Strategies

With Chords Activity 3, you'll use many of the same teaching strategies as Chords Activity 2:

- 1) Chord Fingering Exercise
- 2) Locating and Controlling Tracks
- 3) Note Guiding with Tracks
- 4) Patience with Play-along Tracks

By now, these teaching strategies are becoming second-nature, and hopefully you're comfortable with incorporating them into your lessons. These strategies are just as important for Chords Activity 3, so we recommend reviewing them before teaching this activity. To review these strategies, re-read our Chords Activity 2 Teacher Strategies on page 31.

Part III – Singing Activities

Choosing Songs to Get Started

When first starting out with each Singing Activity we recommend choosing some of the easier songs found in each songbook. Save more challenging songs for later!

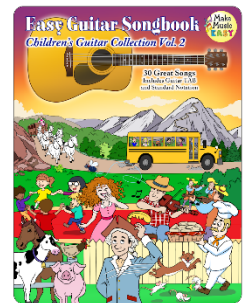


Children's Guitar Collection Vol.1

"Alphabet Song," "Baa Baa Black Sheep," "Bingo," "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," "Hush Little Baby," "Itsy Bitsy Spider," "Happy Birthday," "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush," "London Bridge," "Mary Had a Little Lamb"

Children's Guitar Collection Vol. 2

"Old MacDonald," "Rain Rain Go Away," "Ring Around the Rosie," "Row Row Row Your Boat," "The Muffin Man," "The Farmer in the Dell," "This Old Man," "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," "Wheels on the Bus," "Yankee Doodle"

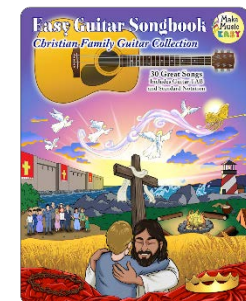


Christian Children's Guitar Collection

"Climb, Climb Up Sunshine Mountain," "Deep and Wide," "God is So Good," "I've Got Peace Like a River," "Jesus Loves Me," "He's Got the Whole World in his Hands," "The B-I-B-L-E," "This Little Light of Mine"

Christian Family Guitar Collection

"Amazing Grace," "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee," "Kum-Ba-Yah," "Michael Row the Boat Ashore," "Rejoice in the Lord Always," "When the Saints Go Marching In," "Will the Circle Be Unbroken"



Christmas Classic Guitar Collection

"Deck the Halls," "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," "Jolly Old St. Nicholas," "O Come, Little Children," "Silent Night," "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," "Up on the Housetop," "We Three Kings"

Singing Activity 1:

Sing and Play the Melody



About Singing Activity 1

With **Singing Activity 1**, your child will practice singing melodies using Pitch Matching to train the voice.



Prerequisite

The prerequisite for this activity is **Melody Activity 1**.



Student Goal

- Sing and Play the Melody Using the Melody Sheet



Teaching Strategies

- Pitch Matching Guidance
- Determining if a Capo is Required

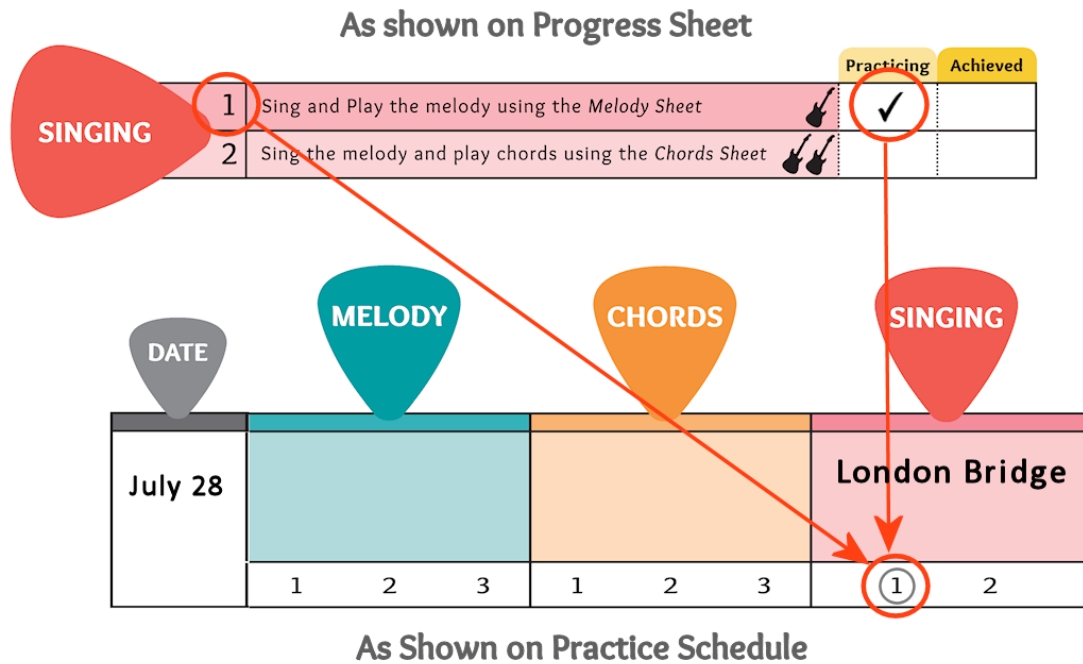


Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of this activity watch our Singing Activity 1 tutorial in the Member's Area at MakeMusicEasy.com

Assigning Singing Activity 1

When you assign Singing Activity 1 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, write the song title in the **Singing** column of the Practice Schedule and circle the number 1.



Achievement Criteria for Singing Activity 1

Singing Activity 1 can be marked **Achieved** when your child sings through the entire melody on a song's Melody Sheet – while using Pitch Matching.

			Practicing	Achieved
SINGING	1	Sing and Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Sing the melody and play chords using the <i>Chords Sheet</i>		

Remember that Achieved does mean "perfect." In fact, your child may sing very few notes correctly early on. So be generous with Achievements – especially at first! Songs can always be revisited to "shoot for perfection."



Student Goal

1) Sing the Melody using the Melody Sheet

Having a guitar in your hands allows you to practicing singing while using a technique called **Pitch Matching**. With this approach, the guitar actually becomes a tool that helps you to match your voice with each of the notes you play. That means that your child can generate an accurate reference pitch for each and every note he or she sings!

The goal is to use pitch matching to learn to sing melodies. Each song's vocal melody corresponds with its guitar notes, making it easy to practice with this technique. Your child will use the song's **Melody Sheet** to do this.

Here's an example of Pitch Matching with the beginning of "Yankee Doodle."

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of "Yankee Doodle" in 2/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, and C5. The lyrics are "Yan - kee Doo - dle went to town a rid - ing on a po - ny." Below the melody is a guitar TAB line with fret numbers: 1, 1, 3, 0, 1, 0, 3, 0, 1, 1, 3, 0, 1, 0. The TAB line is labeled with "T", "A", and "B" on the left.



Audio Example 23

As you can see, each note that's shown in TAB will line up with the word or syllable that's to be sung. The guitar note provides an accurate reference pitch with which to match the voice.



Teaching Strategies

The following strategies will help ensure that your child is singing notes correctly:

- 1) Pitch Matching Guidance
- 2) Determining if a Capo is Required

1) Pitch Matching Guidance

As the teacher, you must determine if your child is correctly matching the voice to the guitar note. If you are a confident singer, this should be no problem.

However, if you are not a confident or experienced singer, you may have some difficulty hearing whether your child is singing the correct note. And even when a note is obviously wrong, helping to direct your child's voice to the correct note may be a challenge for you. With perseverance, your "ear for music" will likely improve, right along with your child's.

Note: *If your child can't hit a correct note, even after repeated tries, simply continue on. Some notes are easier than others, so just move on to the next note and try that instead.*

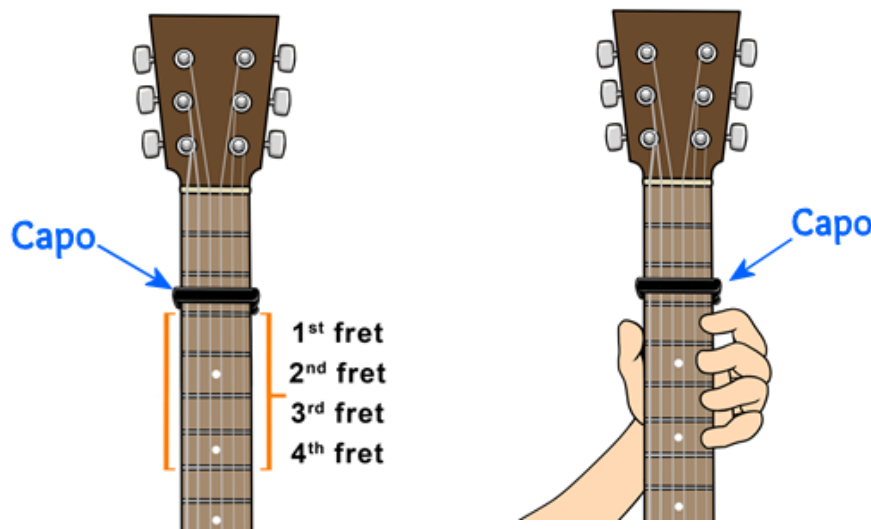
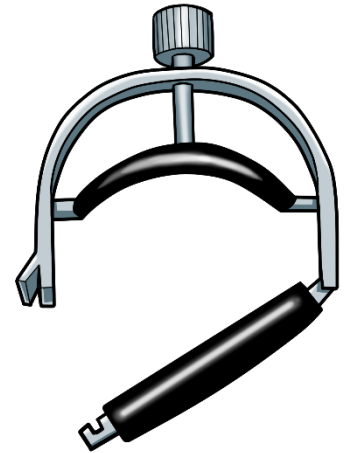
2) Determining If a Capo is Required

A **Guitar Capo** (pronounced *kay-po*) is a device that enables you to instantly raise the pitch of a song. "Raising the pitch" essentially means that all of the musical notes will sound higher. A capo can be placed on different frets of the guitar neck, raising the pitch just a little, or raising it a lot.

Capos are very useful for singers because each of us has a unique vocal range, and certain songs may contain notes that are outside of our range. For example, females (and most children) are often unable to sing lower-pitched notes. When a song contains notes that are too low, kids can rely on a guitar capo to raise the pitch of the song's melody.

The best part is that with a capo, you can play a song's melody and scale with exactly the same fingerings as you normally would. With our songbooks, melodies have been placed within the first four frets of the guitar. With each finger assigned to a fret, you can think of this fingering position as a "Four Fret Box."


When using a capo, you are simply moving this "Four Fret Box" to another spot on the guitar. In a sense, the first fret right after the capo now becomes the first fret on your guitar.



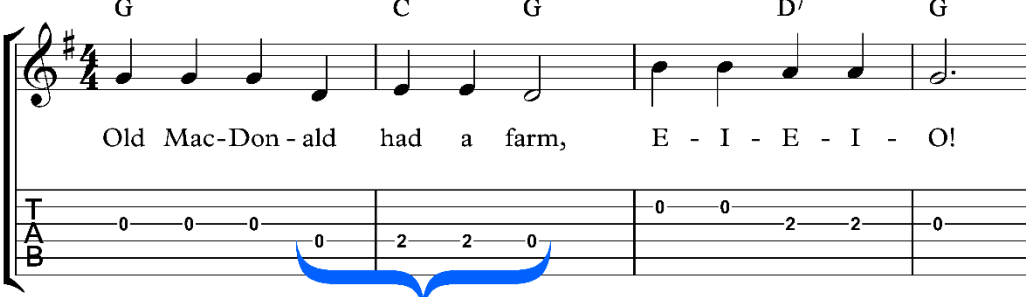
Part III – Singing Activities

A capo's most important function is to enable a singer to sing a melody in a higher pitch. The following examples will compare a song's *melody* as it normally sounds with how it sounds when using a capo. In each example, you'll hear pitch matching with the first line of "Old MacDonald."

First, here's the melody of "Old MacDonald," played without a capo.



No Capo



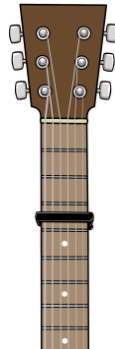
For some students, the lowest pitched notes may be too low to sing

The musical notation shows the melody of "Old MacDonald" in 4/4 time, key of G major. The lyrics are "Old Mac-Don - ald had a farm, E - I - E - I - O!". The guitar tablature below the staff shows the fretting for each note: 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0. A blue bracket highlights the first four notes (0, 0, 0, 0) which are the lowest pitched notes.

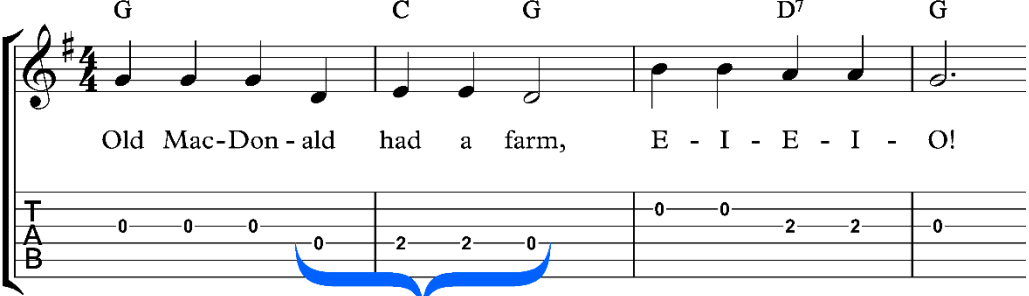


Audio Example 24

Now, here's the melody of "Old MacDonald," played with a capo placed at the 4th fret.



Capo on 4



Lowest pitched notes will now be easier to sing

The musical notation is identical to the previous example, but the guitar tablature is shifted up by 4 frets due to the capo. The fretting for each note is: 4, 4, 4, 4, 6, 6, 4, 4, 4, 6, 6, 4. A blue bracket highlights the first four notes (4, 4, 4, 4) which are now higher pitched than in the previous example.



Audio Example 25

Part III – Singing Activities

As you can hear, all of the notes sound higher, including the very lowest notes.

Here's the “Old MacDonald” melody once more, this time sung with a capo placed at the **7th fret** – just for fun!



Capo on 7

Musical notation for the song 'Old MacDonald' in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written on a treble clef staff. Above the staff, the chords G, C, G, D7, and G are indicated. The lyrics 'Old Mac-Don - ald had a farm, E - I - E - I - O!' are written below the staff. Below the staff, a guitar fretboard diagram shows the fingerings for the melody: the first measure has four notes (G, A, B, C) with fingerings 0, 0, 0, 0; the second measure has three notes (D, E, F#) with fingerings 2, 2, 0; the third measure has four notes (G, A, B, C) with fingerings 0, 0, 2, 2; and the fourth measure has one note (D) with fingering 0.



Audio Example 26

Remember that with a capo, a song's fingering doesn't change. Your child will simply visualize a new “Four Fret Box” wherever the capo is placed; move his or her fingers to this new position; and play the song with the proper (normal) fingering.

Note: *If your child is unable to attach and/or move around the capo, it will become your responsibility as the teacher to do so. Provide assistance with a capo for as long as necessary.*

Singing Activity 2: Sing Melody & Play Chords Using the Chords Sheet



About Singing Activity 2

With **Singing Activity 2**, your child will learn to sing melodies while playing chords on guitar. With this skill, your child will be able to deliver a complete musical performance using just the guitar and voice.



Prerequisite

The prerequisites for this activity are both **Chords Activity 1** and **Singing Activity 1**.



Student Goals

- Coordinate Singing and Strumming
- Singing Notes with Correct Pitch



Teaching Strategies

- Pitch Matching Strategy for Chords
- Determining if a Capo is Necessary



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of this activity watch our Singing Activity 2 tutorial in the Member's Area at MakeMusicEasy.com

Assigning Singing Activity 2

When you assign Singing Activity 2, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, write the song title in the **Singing** column of the Practice Schedule and circle the number 2.

As shown on Progress Sheet

			Practicing	Achieved
SINGING	1	Sing and Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Sing the melody and play chords using the <i>Chords Sheet</i>	✓	

DATE	MELODY			CHORDS			SINGING
Sept 12							London Bridge
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1 2

As Shown on Practice Schedule

Achievement Criteria for Singing Activity 2

Singing Activity 2 can be marked **Achieved** when your child completes the song by strumming the chords and singing the melody.

			Practicing	Achieved
SINGING	1	Sing and Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Sing the melody and play chords using the <i>Chords Sheet</i>	✓	✓

Remember that Achieved does mean "perfect." In fact, your child may sing very few notes correctly early on. So be generous with Achievements – especially at first! Songs can always be revisited to "shoot for perfection."



Student Goals

Learning to sing melodies while playing chords is a gradual process and there are two main components: coordination and pitch.

- 2) Coordinate Singing and Strumming
- 3) Singing Notes with Correct Pitch

1) Coordinate Singing and Strumming

The first focus is to physically coordinate singing the melody while strumming chords. If your child is unable to sing the notes correctly, don't be too concerned. Instead, the initial effort should be on the *physical* coordination required to sing and strum at the same time.

Our Chords Sheets have been designed to make this easy with simple and supportive strumming patterns. Words (or syllables) will either line up, or fall between, each chord that should be strummed. This is shown below:

Hush, lit - tle ba - by, don't say a word, Pa-pa's gon na buy you a mock-ing bird, and

Chords: C G C

Beat: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Strum on this word

Strum on this syllable

Part III – Singing Activities

With our Songbooks, chord symbols have been prominently placed above the music staff to help you follow the lyrics and chords and the same time. Once chord shapes are memorized, it's easy to follow the chords and lyrics at the same time.

Chord Symbols to Follow

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The lyrics are 'Camp - town la - dies sing this song doo dah,___ doo dah,___'. Above the staff, the chord symbols 'G' and 'D7' are indicated with blue arrows pointing to the first and fifth measures respectively. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with four systems, each corresponding to a beat. The first system (beats 1-4) is for the G chord, and the second system (beats 1-4) is for the D7 chord. The tablature shows fingerings for the Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) staves.

Beat	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
T	3		3		2		2	
A	0		0		1		1	
B	0		0		2		2	
B	2		2		0		0	
B	3		3					

Keep in mind that, as with our Chords Activities, Singing Activity 2 can also be performed with “Easy Chords.” Many children under the age of ten love to sing, and “Easy Chords” give them the ability to sing and strum their favorite songs.

Chord Symbols to Follow

This image is identical to the one above, showing the same musical notation, lyrics, and guitar tablature for the song 'Camp-town ladies sing this song'.

Beat	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
T	3		3		2		2	
A	0		0		1		1	
B	0		0		2		2	
B	2		2		0		0	
B	3		3					

2) Singing Notes with Correct Pitch

Once physically able to coordinate singing and strumming, your child can then focus on singing the notes with correct pitch. If your child can already intuitively sing some or all notes correctly – that’s great! Some children have a natural ability to sing and do not have to practice at all.

However, for most children, learning to sing with correct pitch takes time and practice. Fortunately, your child has already been voice training by practicing pitch matching with Singing Activity 1.

Here’s an example of how this might sound with “Hush, Little Baby.”

C G C

Hush, lit-tle ba-by, don't say a word, Pa-pa's gon na buy you a mock-ing bird, and

	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
T	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
A	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
B	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0

Beat: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



Audio Example 27

Of course, your child may require a lot of practice with singing activities to get to a point where every note is sung correctly. This skill will usually happen gradually and over time; little by little, your child’s voice will get stronger. On the next page we’ll be introducing you to a strategy that will go a long way in helping your child sing with proper pitch.



Teacher Strategies

The following strategies will help ensure that your child is singing notes correctly with Singing Activity 2:

- 1) Pitch Matching Strategy when Playing Chords
- 2) Determining if a Capo is Required

1) Pitch Matching Strategy when Playing Chords

When learning to sing, it's common to need help starting off with, and maintaining, accurate pitch. The following **Pitch Matching Strategy** will help your child get started correctly at any point in a song. This strategy requires using a song's Melody Sheet and Chords Sheet together. Fortunately, these are always placed back to back in your songbooks, so you can easily reference each at the flip of a page.

Whenever your child needs help singing correctly, he or she can flip to the Melody Sheet and sing the first few words using pitch matching. Often, this is all it takes to get started correctly. Let's look at a few examples of how this works.

Here's what this might sound like with "When the Saints Go Marching In."

The Melody Sheet shows the melody for the song in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are "Oh, when the saints go march ing". The first four notes of the melody are circled in red, corresponding to the words "Oh, when the saints". Below the staff is a tablature for guitar, showing fret numbers for the strings T, A, and B.

Melody Sheet

The Chords Sheet shows the chords for the song in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are "Oh, when the saints go march-ing". The chords are G, D, and G. Below the staff is a tablature for guitar, showing fret numbers for the strings T, A, and B. The beats are numbered 1 through 4.

Chords Sheet



Audio Example 28

Part III – Singing Activities

It's important to note that this pitch matching strategy can be used at *any point* in a song. It's quite common for a child to be singing accurately and then suddenly go off pitch, perhaps when encountering a new series of notes or a troublesome phrase. Whenever this happens, your child can use this strategy to re-sing those notes and then continue on with the song.

Here's an example of this strategy used later in the same song.

A musical staff in G major (one sharp) showing the melody for the phrase "want to be in that number". The notes are G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), and D4 (half). Chords G, G7, and C are indicated above the staff. The lyrics "want to be in that num - ber." are written below the staff. A red oval highlights the words "want to be". Below the staff is a tablature for guitar with strings T, A, and B. The fret numbers are 0, 0, 0, 3, 3, 3, 1.

Melody Sheet

A musical staff in G major (one sharp) showing the chords for the phrase "want to be in that number". The notes are G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), and D4 (half). Chords G, G7, and C are indicated above the staff. The lyrics "want to be in that num - ber." are written below the staff. Below the staff is a tablature for guitar with strings T, A, and B. The fret numbers are 3, 3, 1, 1, 0, 0, 3, 3, 3, 3, 1, 2.

Chords Sheet



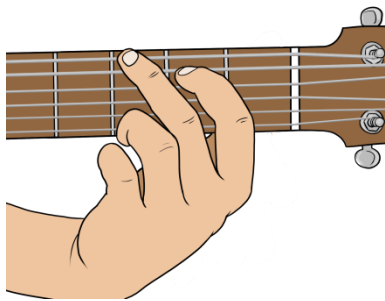
Audio Example 29

Note: Encourage your child to use this strategy as much as necessary in lessons and in practice sessions. As singing ability increases, the need for this strategy decreases.

2) Determining If a Capo is Required

As discussed in the section on Singing Activity 1, it may be necessary for your child to use a guitar capo in order to sing lower-pitched notes. If you notice that your child is struggling with lower notes in a song, help him or her use a capo to raise the pitch of the song.

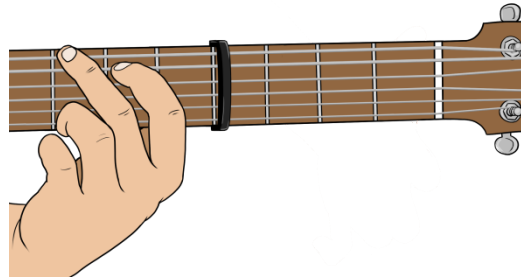
Fortunately, you can also use a capo when playing chords. The chords will have exactly the same fingering and be played in the same way but will have a higher sound. The following example compares a G chord played without, and then with, a capo.



No Capo



Audio Example 30



Capo on 4th Fret



Audio Example 31

The advantage of being able to use the same chord shapes to play a song in different keys is the biggest reason singers use capos. It provides a singer with the ability to customize any song to his or her own voice.

Note: *If your child is unable to attach and/or move around the capo, it will become your responsibility as the teacher to do so. Provide assistance with a capo for as long as necessary.*