

# Christian School Curriculum for Worship Guitar Classes using Jean Welles Worship Guitar Class™ Books

This method is suitable for ages 9 through adult. What an honor it is to help others learn to worship our God. I would like to share my experiences and insights to help you nurture and encourage others in their desire to worship with a guitar in their hands.

One of my daily prayers, as a guitar teacher, was that God would love my students through me. In Scripture, Jesus told us that people would know we are His disciples by our love for one another.

Interweaved in the lessons will be ideas that you may want to implement in your class that I used in my many years of teaching.

In talking to some of the Administrators and teachers of Christian Schools, I've discovered that some of you offer guitar classes as an extra curriculum non-credit class while others incorporate guitar classes with credits in music. Since a semester runs between 17 and 18 weeks, options will be suggested for both formats.

Here is a weekly breakdown of the classes:

Week One:

- 1. Tune the guitars.** Usually this is easiest for the teacher to do. I think a nice size class is under 20. If more than this, you may need to have everyone tune his own instrument with either the DVD or a teacher giving the initial correct note for each string. If the teacher is tuning the guitars, it's not a bad idea to start as soon as the students begin to arrive, even if the class has not 'officially' started.
- 2. Pray.** This is the most important part of each lesson. Usually I pray the first few weeks, then ask individual students to pray. We pray that God would direct our hearts on Him and ask Him to help each student learn to play the guitar and help me to teach.
- 3. Introduction.** This is where you can play the first lesson on the DVD. In page 3 of book one, you'll find a picture of a guitar with all the parts. On page 4, how to tune the guitar by itself or with a guitar tuner is described. Page 5 covers how to hold the guitar and how to read chord charts.
- 4. New Chords.** The lesson starts with 2 chords, 'A' and 'E7.' These are pictured on page 6. Have them practice changing back and forth between these two chords, with four strums on each chord.
- 5. The Song.** 'He's Got The Whole World In His Hands' is the first song. Play it

together very slowly, several times.

6. **Solo.** I suggest having each student play the song individually. This will help to build their confidence and get them used to playing in front of people. I usually have everyone else sing. (Three of the students started leading worship with their guitars after 3 weeks and a bunch of them after just a few months.)
7. **Prayer for Students.** If there is time, I like to pray for each student by name. Pray that God would bless their hands and help them to become wonderful guitarists. Pray that God would use them to draw many people into His presence with their music. I don't do this every week, but every few weeks.
8. **Homework.** At least 20 - 30 minutes a day is what I suggest. For the first week, have them practice changing between the 2 chords, then sing through the song with all the verses a few times. I suggest they start with prayer, this is mentioned on the DVD's too.

### Week Two:

1. **Tune.**
2. **Pray**
3. **Review.** Play 'He's Got The Whole World In His Hands' as a class.
4. **New Chord.** The new chord for this lesson is 'D.' It's pictured on page 7. You don't strum the 6th string in a 'D' chord.
5. **Chord Changes.** Have them practice changing between 'A,' 'D' and 'E7.' I suggest four strums on each chord and just calling out the chords at random. Show them how the first finger can slide on the string for the change between 'D' and 'E7.' This is shown in the DVD.
6. **The Song.** 'My All In All' is the song for this week. Play it together a few times very slowly.
7. **Strumming pattern.** Introduce 'Thumb Strum' shown on page 7. Explain how all chords have specific basses. After they have tried 'Thumb Strum' with each of the chords, try it with the song. Play the song 2 or 3 times with them.
8. **Solo.** If time permits, have each student play the song solo with the 'Thumb Strum' pattern. Usually the students become each other's cheerleader and it also gives them an extra incentive to practice, knowing they'll need to play alone at the end of the class.
9. **Homework.** Practice changing between the 3 chords, then play the new song with both straight strumming and the new 'Thumb Strum' pattern.

### Week Three:

1. **Tune**
2. **Pray**
3. **Review.** Play 'My All In All' with 'Thumb Strum' as a class.
4. **New Chord.** 'G' is the new chord for this week. Most students find this chord

a bit harder than the others. I suggest breaking it down with individual fingers. Change from 'D' to just the 2nd finger of the 'G' chord as fast as they can, etc. This is described on page 8 and also on the DVD.

- 5. The Song.** 'More Precious Than Silver' found on page 8. Most students find the 'G' chord difficult in the beginning. I recommend having them play the song with just a straight strum for a week. Add the Thumb Strum next week.
- 6. Solo.** If time permits, have each student play the song.
- 7. Their Homework.** Practice changing to 'G' as quickly as possible. Play the new song with straight strumming.

#### **Week Four:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. Review.** Play 'More Precious Than Silver' with straight strumming, as a class.
- 4. New Strumming Pattern.** Introduce the 'Thumb Strum' to 'More Precious Than Silver.' This is shown on page 8, book one.
- 5. The Song.** Have the class play 'More Precious Than Silver' with the new strumming pattern. Practice 'Take My Life' with straight strumming. No new chords this week. Take My Life is on page 9 of book one.
- 6. Solo.** If time permits, have each student play either song.
- 7. Homework.** Continue practicing the changes between 'G,' 'A' and 'D'. Play 'More Precious Than Silver' with the 'Thumb Strum' pattern and 'Take My Life' with a straight strumming pattern. Encourage them to keep playing the earlier songs as well.

#### **Week Five:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. Review.** Play 'Take My Life' as a class.
- 4. New Strumming Pattern.** Introduce the new strumming pattern on page 9.
- 5. The Song.** Have the class play 'Take My Life' with the new strumming pattern.
- 6. New Chord.** Teach them the 'C' chord. Have them practice changing between 'G,' 'C,' 'D' and 'C'. This is the chordal pattern to the song for next week.
- 7. Solo.** If time permits, have each student play either 'More Precious Than Silver' or 'Take My Life' with the new strumming pattern.
- 8. Homework.** Play the 'Take My Life' with the new strumming pattern. Have them practice changing between 'G,' 'C,' and 'D.' Encourage them to continue to play the earlier songs as well.

#### **Week Six:**

- 1. Tune**

2. **Pray**
3. **Review.** Play 'Take My Life' with the strumming pattern.
4. **New Chords.** They already learned 'C' from last week, now add the rest of the new chords - 'Dsus,' 'Em' and 'Am', shown on page 10.
5. **The Song.** Play 'Lord I Lift Your Name On High' with a straight strumming pattern. It's just 2 strums per chord for most of the song, but one strum for the 'Dsus' to 'D' on the last line of the song.
6. **Solo.** If time permits, have each student play the new song with a straight strumming pattern.
7. **Homework.** Have them practice changing between all the chords of the new song. Play 'Lord I Lift Your Name On High' with a straight strumming pattern.

### Week Seven:

1. **Tune**
2. **Pray**
3. **Review.** Play 'Lord I Lift Your Name On High' with the straight strumming.
4. **The Song.** Play 'Lord I Lift Your Name On High' with the strumming pattern for 'Take My Life.' 'G' should be getting easier for most players, but 'C' takes awhile to change to quickly. Keeping a relaxed hand helps, as well as aiming towards putting all the fingers down at once.
5. **Solo.**
6. **Homework.** Try to move all the fingers from 'G' to 'C' at the same time. Try to move all the fingers at once from 'D' to 'C.' The 2nd and 3rd fingers just move up 3 strings in the change between 'D' and 'C.' Play 'Lord I Lift Your Name On High' with the strumming pattern.

### Week Eight:

1. **Tune**
2. **Pray**
3. **Review.** Play 'Lord I Lift Your Name On High' with the strumming pattern.
4. **Classical Right Hand Position.** Show them how to get into a good right hand position. Check everyone's hand, as shown on page 11.
5. **Follow Through Stroke.** Demonstrate a good follow through and have them try it. This is shown on page 11 and in the DVD.
6. **Finger-Picking Pattern.** Learn 'Thumb Pluck.'
7. **Song.** Play 'This Is The Day' with the new 'Thumb Pluck' pattern.
8. **Solo.**
9. **Homework.** Have them practice the plucking pattern by itself, then with the song. It's important to keep their hands relaxed. Relaxing your face and your shoulders help to relax the hands.

### **Week Nine:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. Review.** Play 'This Is The Day.'
- 4. New Chord.** Learn 'D/F#' and practice the change from 'G.'
- 5. New Finger-picking Pattern.** Learn the new pattern on page 13. Practice it on a 'D' chord first, then with the chords 'G,' 'D/F#' and 'Em.'
- 6. Song.** Play the song, 'I Love You, Lord' with the new finger-picking pattern. Remind the students to get a good follow through stroke with their right hand fingers. It takes effort, but once you strike a string, the fingers should fall back naturally. Keep relaxed.
- 7. Solo**
- 8. Homework.** Practice the chord changes, the new finger-picking pattern, and then play the new song with the new finger-picking pattern.

### **Week Ten:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. Quiz.** Have each student play 'I Love You, Lord' and 'Lord I Lift Your Name On High.' Grade on improvement, how well they can change chords and how smooth the song is rhythmically. You could also have a written part asking for the names of the parts of the guitar.
- 4. Bonus.** If there is time, introduce the Left-Hand Exercise on page 14, book one. This is the last week with book one.
- 5. Homework.** None this week.

### **Week Eleven:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. New Chords.** Learn 'Am' and 'E.' This is shown on page 3 of book two.
- 4. New Strumming Pattern.** Learn 'Strum Damp.' Teach them the damp first. Work on getting an even tempo 'Strum Damp.' It's helpful to play 'Strum Brush,' as shown in the DVD and described on page 3 of book two. It's quite common for students to play the damp too soon.
- 5. Song.** The song for this week is 'Joshua Fought The Battle of Jericho.'
- 6. Solo.**
- 7. Homework.** Practice the chord changes and 'Strum Damp,' then play the song.

### **Week Twelve:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**

3. **Review.** Play 'Joshua Fought The Battle of Jericho' as a class.
4. **New Chord.** The new chord is 'B7.' Practice changing between 'Em' and 'B7.' The second finger doesn't need to move. This is shown on page 5, book two.
5. **Song.** Play 'King of Kings' with the 'Thumb Pluck' pattern.
6. **Solo**
7. **Homework.** Practice the change between 'Em' and 'B7.' Play the new song.

### Week Thirteen:

1. **Tune**
2. **Pray**
3. **Review.** Play 'King of Kings,' as a class.
4. **New Chord.** The new chord is long 'E7.' Practice changing between the four chords in this lesson, 'E,' 'E7,' 'A' and 'B7.'
5. **New Strumming Pattern.** Learn 'Thumb Brush,' page 6, book two.
6. **Song.** Play 'I've Got A River Of Life' with the 'Thumb Brush' pattern.
7. **Solo.**
8. **Homework.** Practice changing the chords, then play the new song.

### Week Fourteen:

1. **Tune**
2. **Pray**
3. **Review.** Play 'I've Got A River Of Life,' as a class.
4. **The I, IV and V.** Students learn about the basic chord progression for simple songs. They learn this in four easy to play keys: 'A,' 'D,' 'E' and the key of 'G'.
5. **Song.** The song is 'This Little Light Of Mine' in four keys.
6. **Bass Runs.** Learn the bass runs on page 8.
7. **No Solo.** (Probably not enough time for any solos today.)
8. **Homework.** Learn the I, IV and V of these four keys. Play 'This Little Light Of Mine' in the four keys with 'Thumb Brush' and bass runs. On page 10 there is an article on how to write a worship song. Encourage the students to write a song using the ideas there.

### Week Fifteen:

1. **Tune**
2. **Pray**
3. **Review.** Play 'This Little Light of Mine' with the four keys and bass runs as a class.
4. **New Chord.** 'G/D' is the new chord. Practice the change from 'G' to 'G/D.' The second finger slides up and down one fret between these two chords, as shown on page 11, book two.
5. **Finger-Picking Pattern.** Learn the new finger-picking pattern.

- 6. Song.** Play 'Behold, Bless Ye The Lord' with the new finger-picking pattern.
- 7. Solo.** Play this song or have them share an original worship song that they have written using the suggestions and chords from last week.
- 8. Homework.** Practice the new song and suggest that they try writing their own worship song.

### **Week Sixteen:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. Review.** Play 'Behold, Bless Ye The Lord.' Try splitting the class in half to sing it as a round. I suggest only one side of the room plays their guitars, then switch sides. The round starts 2 measures later as played on the DVD.
- 4. New Chords.** The new chords for this week are 'F#m7' and 'Bsus.' Practice changing between 'E,' F#m7,' 'A' and 'Bsus' with four strums on each chord. These are pictured on page 12, book two.
- 5. Song.** Play 'I Could Sing Of Your Love Forever' with four strums on each chord.
- 6. New Strumming Pattern.** Learn the new pattern on page 12 of book two and apply it to the new song.
- 7. Solo.**
- 8. Homework.** Practice changing between the chords 'E,' F#m7,' 'A' and 'Bsus.' Play the new song this week.

### **Week Seventeen:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. Review.** Play 'I Could Sing Of Your Love Forever' as a class.
- 4. New Chords.** Learn 'Asus,' 'Em7,' 'A/C#,' 'A7sus,' and 'A2/C#.' All the chords are on page 14, book two.
- 5. Song.** The song is 'The Heart of Worship.' Play it with a straight strum, then with the strumming pattern from last week.
- 6. Solo.**
- 7. Homework.** Practice the new song and know the I, IV, and V of the four keys by heart from page 8. Original songs earn extra points towards grades.

### **Week Eighteen:**

- 1. Tune**
- 2. Pray**
- 3. Final.** Choose a couple of the last songs to have all the students play. Grade by their improvement and technique. Have students share their original songs. I wouldn't grade the 'quality' of the original song but would give every student

who tries extra points towards their grade. A written part can be knowing the I, IV and V of the four keys and knowing the names of the I, IV and V. This is on page 8 of book two.

If there are only 17 weeks in a particular semester, you can teach the 'Thumb Strum' on lesson 3 instead of lesson 4. Lesson 4 would be Lesson 5 above and you introduce the song, 'Take My Life' the same day as learning the pattern.

If the class will not be given grades, you will not need the Quiz and Test of weeks 10 and 18. For week 10 start with reviewing the song, 'I Love You Lord,' then introduce the Left-Hand exercise on page 14 of book 1. Have each student play this individually and help them get the hand position.

For week 18, have them play several of the songs together and then ask them to share their worship songs. If no one has written a song, have the class do this together. Choose a Scripture, have them make up some words describing what they have read. Decide the key to use and ask individual students to make up a melody for each line while you play one of the three basic chords.

A sample song is at my blog, [jeanwelles.com](http://jeanwelles.com). For a worship contest I sponsored in 2006, one of the teenagers from the Philippines told me he wrote his song by following the suggestions on my blog for how to write a worship song. This is also in book two.

The DVDs for these lessons contain a practice section for each lesson. This can be used in a classroom setting and perfect for use where a professional guitar teacher is not in the classroom.

The lessons can be used for Home Study and credit earned by showing the school their progress at the 10th and 18th week. One semester is Volumes 1 and 2 of the DVDs.

You might want to have a 'Worship Party' with your classes. With my worship classes, we had events where they could invite their friends. Some of the students were brave enough to lead a song solo, but often I would ask who would like to lead a specific song and 2 or 3 hands might go up. They all got to play it together.

The format was a program of songs listing who the players were, with all the words so people could sing along. After the worship, we enjoyed a potluck dinner together. This is also a wonderful format for sharing some of the original songs.

I've had worship parties for years where we have a potluck dinner and then a group of us lead worship. People share their original songs and the evening usually ends with prayer.

Sometimes testimonies are shared.

For the students, I knew they would be too nervous to enjoy dinner first, so I switched the format to worship first, then food and fellowship. It's a wonderful event and gives each student an opportunity to play in front of new people.

Blessings in HIM,  
*Jean Welles*

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