

# Guitar/Recorder Classes with Doby Johns

*\$25/month for guitar or recorder, or \$30 for both.*

We will be learning to play accompaniment guitar, also called rhythm guitar, i.e., playing guitar that complements a singer or an instrumentalist.

I like group classes - that's what I did as an Houston ISD music teacher (I just retired from there), and I hope I will have around 12 students so we can accompany singers and recorders at Christmas time this year.

My method is what I call "Building the Chords." We start off with 2 chords that don't require any fingers(!) so kids can concentrate on learning to strum and using the right hand accurately. Then we start learning chords that only require 1 finger; there are 4. When they have learned those 4 chords we start adding more fingers to the chords until they are playing full chords and begin learning other chords so we can play in different keys.

The first songs we learn only have 1 chord. Changing chords is one of the hardest things about learning to play accompaniment guitar. Using only one finger per chord at the beginning makes this doable even for children. As we add more fingers, we also learn different strums or rhythm patterns. This is a progressive approach to learning to play the guitar, a method I used for years with good success when I taught public school students.

**RECORDER CLASS** meets after the children's choir practice at Joyful Sound, from 5:15 to 6:00PM.

Recorder Class is also a group class that focuses on learning to read music and play melodies beautifully.

We start with the 3 easiest notes to play on the recorder: B, A and G, what some call the "BAG" notes. For fun, we use those notes to spell a number of different words. In no time at all, we can play our first song, "Mary Had a Little Lamb," with just 3 notes! There are several more songs we can learn with just those 3 notes while we begin to learn about different types of notes: whole, half and quarter and their corresponding rests.

Concentrating on those 3 notes not only is easy physically, but makes learning to read music easier too, since we are focusing on just 2 lines and 1 space on the musical staff. Once we can play and read those notes well, we can easily learn another note and its place on the staff.

Then, we add another note, E, our first right hand note. That opens up a few more songs we can play with just 4 notes. Then week by week we learn more notes and musical skills that allow us to play more and more songs that are not only fun but that also require more musical ability.

I was able to teach kids in the Houston ISD schools to play 2 or 3 Christmas songs in time for the annual program in spite of having very little parent support. Homeschooled kids should be able to accomplish this as well even though we only meet once a week because I think I will be able to count on your help.

My goal is to have the kids that take guitar accompany the recorder class during the Christmas ministry time on some Carols.