

# LESSON PLAN: Using C, F and G Chords

## Objective:

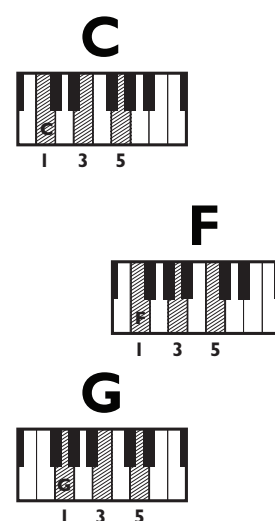
*Students will be able to play the C, F, and G chords along with comping patterns to quickly play a lot of songs. Using a Jam Card they can easily see how voice leading works. This lesson further defines music as language in the way it overlaps with the keyboard lesson using the A, D, and E chords to play the*

## Resources:

Song charts that use the I, IV and V chords in C (the Little Kids Rock website allows you to sort songs in the keyboard songbook section by chord progression by clicking on the title of the chord progression column)

## Procedures:

- 1 Demonstrate how the C, F, and G chords can be used to play lots of songs. Play selections that are familiar to them. Everything from “Twenty Two” by Taylor Swift to “You Don’t Know You’re Beautiful” by One Direction uses this classic progression.
- 2 Help students find these notes on their keyboards. Play one of the songs you’ve selected by having students use only the root of each chord. This lays an important foundation for them being able to find notes quickly without getting bogged down by trying to get their hands to play chords.
- 3 If the students are new to playing chords, have some of the students use “piano power chords” while others use “2 note chords” (see lesson plans “Piano Power Chords” and “2 Note Chords” for more info). After a few minutes have the groups switch. Playing simplified chords this way is easy for any size hand to do and builds the muscle memory required for playing a three note chord.
- 4 Have students play the chords using three fingers. The best fingering for these root position chords is to use the thumb (1), middle (3), and pinky (5) for each one. A good alternative fingering that keyboard players use depending on the situation and that is easier for beginners is thumb (1), index (2), and ring (4).
- 5 Apply the necessary comping patterns to your song selection. Most comping patterns rely on a coordination that uses two hands at the same time. If your students are double up on keyboards, you may need to divide the comping pattern so that one student plays a “bass line” while the other uses the rhythm of the chords.
- 6 After students are familiar with the idea of moving this major chord shape around the keyboard from C to F and G, try playing these same three chords with “voice leading” by using Jam Card 7a. Voice leading makes a smooth connection between chords by only moving the necessary notes. While this is a more sophisticated way to play the keyboard, it is important that it isn’t introduced until the students are capable of moving the “root position” chord shape around. Otherwise the logic of how chords work and the ear training that naturally comes along with that gets left behind.



## National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Pr6.1.H.11a (HS Accomplished) Perform with expression and technical accuracy, in individual and small group performances, a varied repertoire of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces, improvisations, and chordal accompaniments in a variety of styles, demonstrating sensitivity to the audience and an understanding of the context (social, cultural, and historical). Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

