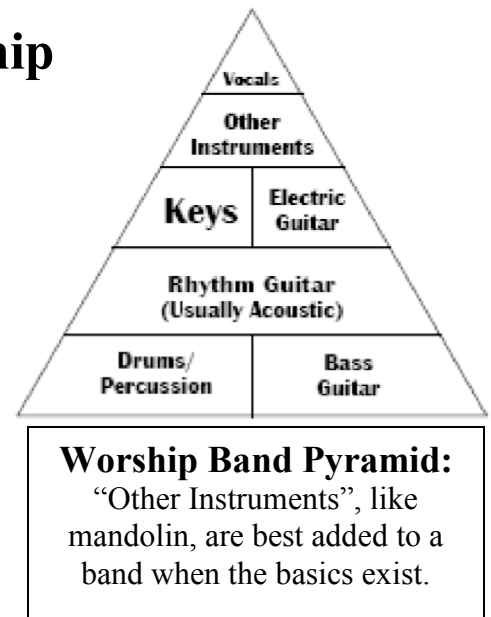


# Tips/Tricks for Using a Mandolin in Worship

By Mark Hilbelink

## • Best Keys to Play In

- D (Two sharps):
  - Normal Chord Progression: D→G→A
- G (One sharp):
  - Normal Chord Progression: G→C→D
- Capoeing for other common keys
  - Common Hymn Keys (Written for Organ/Piano)
    - C (No sharps or flats): Capo III to D, Capo V to G
    - Eb (Three flats): Capo I to D
    - Bb (Two flats): Capo III to G
  - Common Modern Worship Keys (Written for Guitar)
    - F (One flat): Capo V to D
    - E (Four sharps): Capo I to D
    - G & D are also common modern worship keys (so they fit mandolin)



## • Cheats for Abnormal Chords in D & G

- Em=G
- Am=C
- E=No cheat
- Bm=D
- B=No cheat
- F# or F#m=A
- Chords with numbers in them=Ignore the numbers for easy mandolin playing

## • Strumming Patterns

- On the Beat: Strumming on the beat is similar to rhythm guitar playing. The most important strum is the downbeat of the measure. Often, this is coordinated with the kick drum on the drumset (or, the “boom” of the beat in bluegrass).
- Off the Beat: For bluegrass-style playing, strumming off the beat is the important role of the mandolin. Usually, this coordinates with the snare hit on the drumset (or, the “chuck” of the beat).

## • Common Sources for Mandolin Hymns

- English or Irish Hymns (Come Thou Fount, Fairest Lord Jesus, This is My Father’s World, etc.) [Legato - Often accompanied by a recorder & in 6/8 or 9/8 time]
- Southern Harmony Hymns (Power in the Blood, Nothing But the Blood, When the Roll is Called Up Yonder, In the Sweet By and By, I’ll Fly Away, Do Lord, etc. - anything you can “twang”) [Punchy - Often accompanied by mandolin/banjo & in 4/4 or 3/4 timing]

## • Common Sources for Mandolin Worship Songs

- British/Irish Worship Music (Martin Smith/Delirious, Vineyard UK)
- American Worship that is normally keyed in “E” for guitar-driven worship (Paul Baloche, Billy Foote, Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin)
- Note: Hillsong Worship Music (Often written in D or G, but with strange VCB progressions....Hillsong music is often *not* written like American/English music for accompaniment with traditional instruments – piano/mandolin....Hillsong is distinctly guitar/drums-driven)

## • Tips for Using Mandolin

- Hymns: Mandolin can *usually* fit a broad range of hymns, but favors Southern Harmony-style hymns rather than majestic European hymns (1800’s rather than 1600’s)
- Modern Worship Music: Worship songs are *rarely* written to use mandolin or piano as a chief instrument, so using them can be very tricky and often rhythmically challenging
- Other instruments: Mandolin sounds good with *very few* other instruments, especially traditional “band” instruments – brass, woodwinds, etc. It usually matches up best with a bluegrass-style band (rhythm guitar, bass, drums, banjo, fiddle, resonator, etc.)