

Bassett Jam Guidelines for “Making Music With Friends”

1. Be in tune – good electronic tuners that clip on your instrument are inexpensive.
2. Wait your turn. Jamming is an equal opportunity process. Generally, each person takes a turn in a rotating order to suggest a song. If no other players want to play that song, pick one that others are willing to try. Jamming is not for solo performances.
3. Let the song leader lead – even if the song has different words or a different order for the song parts you are used to, let the song leader lead it as he/she wishes, with instrumental breaks, changes in lyrics etc.
4. Get quieter when needed for the instrumental breaks. Let the person taking the break be heard.
5. Watch for the end – it’s up to the song leader to decide when a song ends, and he/she will let you know the song is wrapping up by usually sticking their foot out or repeating the last line.
6. You don’t have to play every song. If you’re having trouble playing a song, don’t play the wrong chords, just keep quiet or take a break.
7. Be ready to pick a song when it’s your turn. You can lead the song or suggest a song someone else can lead that you want to hear or play. Ideally, jam songs are three or four chord songs. Five chords is about the maximum. Don’t select songs with too many chords or chords that no one knows. Such songs are affectionately known as “jam busters”.
8. Play appropriate to the jam - suggest songs that are in the style the jam group is playing (country, 70’s rock, bluegrass etc.).
9. Call out the name of the song and key you are playing in before you start the song and demonstrate how the changes of the song go before you actually start playing it if you think it is needed.
10. When leading a song watch for players who want to do instrumental breaks. When it comes time to call them to play, call their name or instrument, or just make eye contact and nod your head or point your finger at them.

TIP: Most songs played are made up of three chords and usually begin on the chord of the key the song is in. Learn the chord sets, the 1-4-5 rule, and practice chord changes within each key and you will be able to play 90% of the songs played in any jam. If you play guitar, learn and use “cheater” bar chords (playing only the bottom four strings) to be able to transition more quickly between chords. The three major chords for some keys are: (A/D/E – C/F/G – D/G/A – E/A/B – F/Bb/C – G/C/D).

1-15-23 LA

Planned Jams 1-5pm 1/28/23, 2/25/23, 3/25/23