

Ukulele Yes!

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THE CRUEL WAR

Traditional, arr. James Hill

Teaching/Learning Notes (D6 Tuning: a, d, f#, b)

Focus On:

- Singing
- Harmony singing
- Minor chords

Key Points:

- A fun way to create harmonies is by “singing the strings.” To do this, follow these steps:
 - 1) learn the chords
 - 2) make the chord shapes with the left hand while picking a single string (instead of strumming). For example, play a G chord but pick only the B string. When the chord changes to Em, continue to pick the B string. Does the note change? No. Now change to a Am chord while picking the B string. Does the note change? Yes. Continue this process for the rest of the chords in *The Cruel War*. The result? Our first harmony part.
 - 3) Repeat step 2, this time picking the F# string. A second harmony part is the result.
 - 4) Finally, repeat step 2, this time picking the D string. A third harmony part is the result.
 - 5) Find two or more friends. Sing or pick these three harmony parts together. Have fun!
- The musical phrases in *The Cruel War* are quite long. Take, for example, the phrase “I want to be with him, it grieves my heart so, won't you let me go with you, no my love, no.” It's very difficult to sing this entire phrase without taking a breath. Options are:
 - 1) Take a deep breath and try to make it all the way through
 - 2) Choose a place to breath (e.g. after the word “him”)
 - 3) If singing with a group of people, stagger your breathing (i.e. don't all breathe in the same place) so that the breaths don't interrupt the phrase.

Suggestions for Extension and Enrichment:

- Listen to (and watch) Peter, Paul and Mary's arrangement of *The Cruel War* here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fto9ji994JY>

The song was a hit single for the group in 1966. What do you like about this performance and/or arrangement? What would you change?

- Imagine yourself as a young person with an iPod during the American Civil War (1861–1865). What would be the Top 5 most popular songs during this period? Who would be the most popular performers of the day?