

# **Bluegrass Jamming:**

## **A Unique Musical/Social Experience**

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### **How to Get Started:**

- Learning how to play vs. playing with others
- Beginner's jams / Slow jams
- Learning the material-what's appropriate?
- Avoid being a jam-buster!

### **How to Successfully Participate in a Jam:**

- Are you familiar with the material?
- Can you detect the level of musicianship?
- Consider the instrument you're playing:
  - Can you play a break?
  - Can you play back-up?
  - Can you "kick-off" a song?
- Singing
  - Singing lead
  - Singing harmony
  - Singing in unison

### **Things You Should Be Aware Of:**

- If you don't know the song, play softly
- If you call out a song; you better know how to play it and sing it:
  - Know what key it's in
  - Know the tempo
  - Know what instrument kicks it off
  - Know where the breaks are
  - Know how to end it
  - Know how to take control if necessary
- Be sensitive about the vocals: Instruments should "support" the vocals, not overwhelm
- Figure out who sings what part - *before* the song starts
- Know the verse (sung solo); know the chorus (where harmony singing might be ok)
- Some keys are better than others for certain songs/instruments

### **More Things You Should Be Aware Of:**

For some instruments; is more than one too many?

Guitar  
Banjo  
Fiddle  
Mandolin  
Dobro  
Bass

What instruments are crucial in a jam?

### **Complaints Heard About Jams**

"They played songs I didn't know."  
"They played too fast."  
"Nobody mentioned the chord changes."  
"Nobody let me take a break."  
"Nobody asked if I wanted to do a song."

### **Participating In a Jam: It's All Up to You**

- How important is it to you to participate?
- How hard are you willing to work at it?
- Are you willing to invest the time and money?

### **What's Your Goal?**

- Gain Musical Experience
- Replicate What You've Heard
- Learn New Songs
- Meet Other Musicians
- Try to Have Fun As Much As You Can