

# He's got the Whole World in His Hands

(page 20 of *Ukulele Basics*)

## Introduction

First published in *Spirituals Triumphant, Old and New* in 1927, this song became popularised by both American gospel singers and British skiffle and pop musicians.

## Did you know?

- This song has been used by many people and groups including Nottingham Forest Football Club, the movie *Rocket Man*, and in a PlayStation commercial.

## Starting out on the carpet

- Sing the song to the children and ask them if they recognise it. Teach the tune line by line using call and response. Make sure that the pitch changes are accurate.
- Place your hand in position for the G chord and ask them if they can tell which chord this is. Tell them they will need to remember this position for later!
- Now play the song with ukulele accompaniment to the children. Tell them to watch and listen very carefully, and to see if they can work out (a) how many chords you play, (b) which fingers you use and (c) when the chord changes.
- Next, show them slowly how to change between G and C chords, explaining that you can leave your middle finger on the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret of the A string when you change to make it easier to do it quickly. Ask them to show you on their fingers which fingers are used.

## Getting going with the ukuleles

- Start by practising playing the G chord. Ask everyone to get into pairs, taking it in turns to play the chord. Demonstrate the 'dead string' noise (track 9) and ask them to check for this when listening to their partner. Encourage them to take the 'Dead String Dodger' test (page 10) to fix the sound!
- Next, do some finger aerobics. To start with, count to 4 before changing chords, then 2, then 1 and finally try changing straight from one to another.
- Now try playing the chord pattern found in the song, first of all just with down-strums:
  - C – C – C – C
  - G – G – G – G
  - C – C – C – C
  - G – G – C [rest]

In order to help everyone keep time and put the chords in context, it is helpful if you sing the tune while they play. Once they're confident, see if they can join in with the singing.

## What next?

- See if you can add the up-strokes as marked in the book. The pattern usually matches the rhythm of the words.
- There are four more verses aside from those in *Ukulele Basics*. You could introduce all of the verses (see next page), and spot which word the chord changes fall on. If you put the lyrics on your whiteboard, ask the children to add the chords above the words where they change.

### **Complete lyrics**

1. He's got the whole world in His hands, (x3)  
He's got the whole world in His hands.
2. He's got the wind and the rain in His hands, (x3)  
He's got the whole world in His hands.
3. He's got the tiny little baby in His hands, (x3)  
He's got the whole world in His hands.
4. He's got you and me, brother, in His hands, (x3)  
He's got the whole world in His hands.
5. He's got ev'rybody here in His hands, (x3)  
He's got the whole world in His hands.