

# Traditional Christmas Carols

With chords arranged for guitar

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The guitar isn't a great instrument for accompanying old hymns generally, and traditional carols can certainly be challenging for the player.

These arrangements are for the reasonably competent guitar player and are structured to make singing along (and therefore leading) easier.

The carols use a "/" notation to attempt help you keep timing and words joined up; a down-strum on every "/" should keep you in the right place until you've practised a few times. Carols are in 4/4 time unless stated otherwise.

It is worth noting that there are countless variations on the *lyrics* on Christmas carols! Please do check before you bring together lyrics from different sources.

All carols take up 1-2 sheets only, and blank pages are used to make sure that the whole selection can be printed off in book form.

Merry Christmas!

# 1. Angels, From the Realms of Glory

---

Words by James Montgomery, 1816.

G / / / D / G /  
Angels, from the realms of glory,  
Em / / G D / G /  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
G / Em / D / G /  
Heralds of creation's story,  
/ / / / D / G /  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:

chorus:

G / E / Am / D / G / C A7 D / / /  
Come and worship  
Em D G Am G / D7 /  
Christ, the new-born King;  
G / E / Am / D / G / C A7 D / / /  
Come and worship  
Em D G Am G / D7 / G / / /  
Worship Christ the newborn King!

G / / / D / G /  
Shepherds, in the fields abiding,  
Em / / G D / G /  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
G / Em / D / G /  
God with us is now residing,  
/ / / / D / G /  
Yonder shines the infant Light:  
(chorus)

G / / / D / G /  
Sages, leave your contemplations,  
Em / / G D / G /  
Brighter visions beam afar;  
G / Em / D / G /  
Seek the great Desire of Nations;  
/ / / / D / G /  
Ye have seen His natal star:  
(chorus)

G / / / D / G /  
Though an infant now we view Him,  
Em / / G D / G /  
He will share His Father's throne,  
G / Em / D / G /  
Gather all the nations to Him;  
/ / / / D / G /  
Every knee shall then bow down:  
(chorus)

## 2. As With Gladness Men of Old

---

Words by William Dix, 1858.

G / D G C D G /  
As with gladness men of old  
C / G C G D G /  
Did the guiding star behold;  
G / D G C D G /  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
C / G C G D G /  
Leading onward, beaming bright;  
G D Em / D / G  
So, most gracious Lord, may we  
C D G Am G D G /  
Led by You for ever be

G / D G C D G /  
As with joyful steps they sped  
C / G C G D G /  
To that lowly manger bed,  
G / D G C D G /  
There to bend the knee before  
C / G C G D G /  
Him whom heaven and earth adore;  
G D Em / D / G  
So may we with willing feet  
C D G Am G D G /  
Ever seek thy mercy seat.

G / D G C D G /  
 As they offered gifts most rare  
 C / G C G D G /  
 At the manger rude and bare;  
 G / D G C D G /  
 So may we with holy joy,  
 C / G C G D G /  
 Pure, and free from sin's alloy,  
 G D Em / D / G  
 All our costliest treasures bring,  
 C D G Am G D G /  
 Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

G / D G C D G /  
 Holy Jesus, every day  
 C / G C G D G /  
 Keep us in the narrow way;  
 G / D G C D G /  
 And, when earthly things are past,  
 C / G C G D G /  
 Bring our ransomed souls at last  
 G D Em / D / G  
 Where they need no star to guide,  
 C D G Am G D G /  
 Where no clouds thy glory hide.

### 3. Away in a Manger

---

Third verse by John McFarland.  
Public domain.

Capo 3  
3/4

/ D / / / / / / / Em /  
Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
/ / / A D / / E7 / / A /  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
/ D / / / / / / F#m / / Em /  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
/ / / A D / / A7 / / D / /  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

/ D / / / / / / / Em /  
The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,  
/ / / A D / / E7 / / A /  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
/ D / / / / / / F#m / / Em /  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
/ / / A D / / A7 / / D / /  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

/ D / / / / / / / Em /  
Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
/ / / A D / / E7 / / A /  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
/ D / / / / / / F#m / / Em /  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
/ / / A D / / A7 / / D / /  
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.



## 4. Christians awake!

John Byrom.

Public Domain.

The "/" notation shows every beat in the bar rather than just the main tempo

C / G C / G C / F  
Christians, awake, salute the happy morn

C Dm7 C / F C G C /  
Whereon the Saviour of mankind was born.

/ / F / Dm7 / G  
Rise to adore the mystery of love

E Am / Dm Am E Am /  
Which hosts of angels chanted from above,

F C / / G / / /  
With them the joyful tidings first begun

C F G C / F C G C  
Of God incarnate and the virgin's Son.

C / G C / G C / F  
Then to the watchful shepherds it was told,

C Dm7 C / F C G C /  
Who heard th'angelic herald's voice, "Behold,

/ / F / Dm7 / G  
I bring good tidings of a Saviour's birth

E Am / Dm Am E Am /  
To you and all the nations of the earth;

F C / / G / / /  
This day hath God fulfilled His promised Word;

C F G C / F C G C  
This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord."

C / G C / G C / F  
He spake; and straightway the celestial choir

C Dm7 C / F C G C /  
In hymns of joy, unknown before, conspire;

/ / F / Dm7 / G  
The praises of redeeming love they sang,

E Am / Dm Am E Am /  
And Heav'n's whole orb with alleluias rang.

F C / / G / / /  
God's highest glory was their anthem still,



C F G C / F C G C  
Peace upon earth and unto men good will.

C / G C / G C / F  
To Bethl'em straight th'enlightened shepherds ran  
C Dm7 C / F C G C /  
To see the wonder God had wrought for man  
/ / F / Dm7 / G  
And found, with Joseph and the blessèd maid,  
E Am / Dm Am E Am /  
Her Son, the Saviour, in a manger laid;  
F C / / G / / /  
Then to their flocks, still praising God, return,  
C F G C / F C G C  
And their glad hearts with holy rapture burn.

C / G C / G C / F  
Like Mary let us ponder in our mind  
C Dm7 C / F C G C /  
God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind!  
/ / F / Dm7 / G  
Trace we the Babe, who hath retrieved our loss,  
E Am / Dm Am E Am /  
From His poor manger to His bitter cross,  
F C / / G / / /  
Tread in His steps, assisted by His grace,  
C F G C / F C G C  
Till man's first heav'nly state again takes place

C / G C / G C / F  
Then may we hope, th'angelic hosts among,  
C Dm7 C / F C G C /  
To sing, redeemed, a glad triumphal song.  
/ / F / Dm7 / G  
He that was born upon this joyful day  
E Am / Dm Am E Am /  
Around us all His glory shall display.  
F C / / G / / /  
Saved by His love, incessantly we sing  
C F G C / F C G C  
Eternal praise to Heav'n's almighty King

## 5. Good Christian Men, Rejoice

---

Latin carol.

Public Domain.

Capo 3, 6/4

The "/" notation shows every beat in the bar rather than just the main tempo

D/ / // / ///  
Good Christian men, rejoice  
/ Bm/ / // / D//  
With heart, and soul, and voice;  
// / A/ / D/ / //  
Give ye heed to what we say:  
Bm  
(News, news!)  
Em/ / D/ / // / //

D/ / // / ///  
 Good Christian men, rejoice!  
 / Bm/ / // / D//  
 With heart, and soul, and voice;  
 // / A/ / D/ / //  
 Now ye hear of endless bliss:  
 Bm  
 (News, news!)  
 Em/ / D/ / // / //  
 Jesus Christ was born for this!  
 D/ / F#m/ / D/ / Bm/  
 He has ope'd the heavenly door,  
 / A/ / D/ / // / // /  
 And we are blessed for evermore.  
 D6/ / F#/ / Bm/ A/  
 Christ was born for this!  
 D/ / A7/ / D//  
 Christ was born for this!

D/ / // / ///  
 Good Christian men, rejoice  
 / Bm/ / // / D//  
 With heart, and soul, and voice;  
 // / A/ / D/ / //  
 Now ye need not fear the grave:  
 Bm  
 (News, news,)  
 Em/ / D/ / // / //  
 Jesus Christ was born to save!  
 D/ / F#m/ / D/ / Bm/  
 Calls you one and calls you all,  
 / A/ / D/ / // / // /  
 To gain his everlasting hall.  
 D6/ / F#/ / Bm/ A/  
 Christ was born to save!  
 D/ / A7/ / D//  
 Christ was born to save!

## 6. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

---

Anonymous. Public domain.

Em B Em C  
God rest ye merry, gentlemen,  
/ Am7 B /  
Let nothing you dismay;  
Em B Em C  
Remember Christ our Saviour  
/ Am7 B /  
Was born on Christmas Day  
Am G Bm Em  
To save us all from Satan's pow'r  
C Em D  
When we were gone astray.

chorus:

/ G C Am B Em  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
/ D  
Comfort and joy;  
/ G C Am B Em  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Em B Em C  
From God our heavenly Father  
/ Am7 B /  
A blessed angel came,  
Em B Em C  
And unto certain shepherds  
/ Am7 B /  
Brought tidings of the same,  
Am G Bm Em  
How that in Bethlehem was born  
C Em D  
The Son of God by name.  
(chorus)

Em B Em C  
"Fear not, then," said the angel,  
/ Am7 B /  
"Let nothing you afright;  
Em B Em C  
This day is born a Saviour  
/ Am7 B /  
Of a pure virgin bright,  
Am G Bm Em  
To free all those who trust in Him  
C Em D  
From Satan's power and might."  
(chorus)

# 7. Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

Words by Charles Wesley, 1739.  
Public Domain.

D / / A D / / A  
Hark, the herald angels sing,  
D / Em / D A D /  
"Glory to the newborn King.  
D / / A Bm / E /  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
F#m / A / / E A /  
God and sinners reconciled."  
/ / / D A7 D / A  
Joyful all ye nations rise,  
/ / / D A7 D / A  
Join the triumph of the skies,  
G / / / Em B Em  
With th'angelic host proclaim,  
A / D / / A D /  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."  
G / / / Em B Em /  
Hark, the herald angels sing,  
A / D / / A D  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

D / / A D / / A  
Christ by highest heav'n adored,  
D / Em / D A D /  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
D / / / A Bm / E /  
Late in time behold Him come,  
F#m / A / / E A /  
Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
/ / / D A7 D / A  
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;

/ / / D A7 D / A  
 Hail, th'incarnate Dei-ty;  
 G / / / Em B Em /  
 Pleased as man with men to dwell,  
 A / D / / A D /  
 Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
 G / / / Em B Em /  
 Hark, the herald angels sing,  
 A / D / / A D  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

D / / A D / / A  
 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace,  
 D / Em / D A D /  
 Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
 D / / A Bm / E /  
 Light and life to all He brings,  
 F#m / A / / E A /  
 Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
 / / / D A7 D / A  
 Mild He lays His glory by,  
 / / / D A7 D / A  
 Born that man no more may die,  
 G / / / Em B Em /  
 Born to raise the sons of earth,  
 A / D / / A D /  
 Born to give us second birth.  
 G / / / Em B Em /  
 Hark, the herald angels sing,  
 A / D / / A D  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

## 8. Joy to the World!

Words adapted from Psalm 98 by Isaac Watts, 1719.  
Public Domain.

*C* / / *Dm* *C* *G* *C*  
Joy to the world! The Lord is come;  
*F* / *G* / *C* / / /  
Let earth receive her King.  
/ / / / / / / / /  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
/ / / / / / / /  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
*G* / / / /  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
*C* / *F* *C* / *Dm* *C* *G7* *C*  
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

*C* / / *Dm* *C* *G* *C*  
Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns;  
*F* / *G* / *C* / / /  
Let men their songs employ.  
/ / / / / / / / / /  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
/ / / / / / / /  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
*G* / / / /  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
*C* / *F* *C* / *Dm* *C* *G7* *C*  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.



C / / Dm C G C  
 He rules the world with truth and grace,  
 F / G / C / / /  
 And makes the nations prove  
 / / / / / / / /  
 The glories of His righteousness,  
 / / / /  
 And wonders of His love,  
 G / / /  
 And wonders of His love,  
 C / F C / Dm C G7 C  
 And wonders, wonders of His love.

# 9. O Come, All Ye Faithful

Words and music by John Wade, 1751.  
Public domain.

G / / / D / / / G D G C G/ D  
O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;  
Em/ / D A D / / G D/A7/ D / D7 /  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethelhem.  
G / Am G D7 / G / D G Em A D/ /  
Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels;

chorus:

/ G / / / / /  
O come, let us adore Him;  
/ / D G C G / D  
O come, let us adore Him;  
G Am G D A D / G C  
O come, let us adore Him,  
G / D7 / G / / /  
Christ the Lord!

G / / / D/ / / G D G C G/ D /  
Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
Em/ D A D / / G D/A7/ D / D7 /  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:  
G / Am G D7/G/ DG EmA D/ /  
"Glory to God, in the highest!"  
(chorus)

G / / / D / / / G D G C G/ D /  
Yea, Lord we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;  
Em/D A D / / G D/A7/ D / D7 /  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n.  
G / Am G D7/ G/ D G Em A D/ /  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:  
(chorus)



# 10.0 Little Town of Bethlehem

Words by Phillips Brooks, 1868.

Capo 3

D / Bm A  
O little town of Bethlehem,  
Em A D /  
How still we see thee lie;  
D / Bm A  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
G A D /  
The silent stars go by.  
F#m A D /  
Yet in the dark streets shineth  
G Bm A /  
The everlasting light;  
D Bm F#m A  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
G A D  
Are met in thee tonight.

D / Bm A  
For Christ is born of Mary;  
Em A D /  
And gathered all above,  
D / Bm A  
While mortals sleep the angels keep  
G A D /  
Their watch of wond'ring love.  
F#m A D /  
O morning stars together  
G Bm A /  
Proclaim the holy birth;  
D Bm F#m A  
And praises sing to God the King,  
G A D  
And peace to men on earth.

D / Bm A  
 How silently, how silently  
 Em A D /  
 The wondrous gift is giv'n!  
 D / Bm A  
 So God imparts to human hearts  
 G A D /  
 The blessings of His heav'n.  
 F#m A D /  
 No ear may hear His coming,  
 G Bm A /  
 But in this world of sin,  
 D Bm F#m A  
 Where meek souls will receive Him still,  
 G A D  
 The dear Christ enters in.

D / Bm A  
 O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
 Em A D /  
 Descend to us, we pray;  
 D / Bm A  
 Cast out our sin and enter in,  
 G A D /  
 Be born in us today.  
 F#m A D /  
 We hear the Christmas angels  
 G Bm A /  
 The great glad tidings tell;  
 D Bm F#m A  
 O come to us, abide with us,  
 G A D  
 Our Lord, Emmanuel.

# 11. Once in Royal David's City

Words by Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander, 1848.  
Music by Henry John Gauntlett, 1849.  
Public domain.

Capo 5

C G7 C / G / / C  
Once in royal David's city  
C Am C / F G C  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
C G7 C / D7 / G7 C  
Where a mother laid her Baby  
C Am C / F G C  
In a manger for His bed:  
F / C / Gsus G C  
Mary was that mother mild,  
F / C / F G C  
Jesus Christ her little Child.

C G7 C / G / / C  
He came down to earth from heaven,  
C Am C / F G C  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
C G7 C / D7 / G7 C  
And His shelter was a stable,  
C Am C / F G C  
And His cradle was a stall;  
F / C / Gsus G C  
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,  
F / C / F G C  
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

C G7 C / G / / C  
And through all His wondrous childhood  
C Am C / F G C  
He would honour and obey,  
C G7 C / D7 / G7 C  
Love and watch the lowly maiden,  
C Am C / F G C  
In whose gentle arms He lay:  
F / C / Gsus G C  
Christian children all must be

F / C / F G C  
Mild, obedient, good as He.

C G7 C / G / / C  
For he is our childhood's pattern;

C Am C / F G C  
Day by day, like us He grew;

C G7 C / D7 / G7 C  
He was little, weak and helpless,

C Am C / F G C  
Tears and smiles like us He knew;

F / C / Gsus G C  
And He feeleth for our sadness,

F / C / F G C  
And He shareth in our gladness.

C G7 C / G / / C  
And our eyes at last shall see Him,

C Am C / F G C  
Through His own redeeming love;

C G7 C / D7 / G7 C  
For that Child so dear and gentle

C Am C / F G C  
Is our Lord in heaven above,

F / C / Gsus G C  
And He leads His children on

F / C / F G C  
To the place where He is gone.

C G7 C / G / / C  
Not in that poor lowly stable,

C Am C / F G C  
With the oxen standing by,

C G7 C / D7 / G7 C  
We shall see Him; but in heaven,

C Am C / F G C  
Set at God's right hand on high;

F / C / Gsus G C  
Where like stars His children crowned

F / C / F G C  
All in white shall wait around.

# 12.Silent Night

---

Words by Joseph Mohr, 1818.  
Music by Franz Gruber, 1818.  
Public domain.

6/4

A / / /  
Silent night! Holy night!  
E7 / A /  
All is calm, all is bright,  
D / A /  
Round yon virgin mother and child!  
D / A /  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
E7 / A /  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
A E7 A /  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

A / / /  
Silent night! Holy night!  
E7 / A /  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
D / A /  
Glories streams from heaven afar,  
D / A /  
Heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia."  
E7 / A /  
Christ the Saviour is born,  
A E7 A /  
Christ the Saviour is born.



A / / /  
Silent night! Holy night!  
E7 / A /  
Son of God, love's pure light  
D / A /  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
D / A /  
With the dawn of redeeming grace.  
E7 / A /  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
A E7 A /  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

# 13.The First Noel

Traditional English carol.  
Public domain.

3/4

D / Bm A / Em D / G D /  
The first Noel the angel did say  
A D / G D / A D / A7 D  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
A D / Bm A / Em D / G D  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
A D G / D / A D / A D /  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

chorus:

A D / Bm F#m / D G / / D / /  
Noel, noel, noel, noel,  
Bm / G D / A D / A7 D /  
Born is the King of Israel.

D / Bm A / Em D / G D /  
They looked up and saw a star  
A D / G D / A D / A7 D  
Shining in the east beyond them far,  
A D / Bm A / Em D / G D  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
A D G / D / A D / A D /  
And so it continued both day and night.  
(chorus)

D/ Bm A / Em D / G D /  
And by the light of that same star,  
A D / G D / A D / A7 D  
The wise men came from country far;  
A D / Bm A / Em D / G D  
To seek for a king was their intent,  
A D G / D / A D / A D /  
And to follow the star wherever it went.  
(chorus)

D / Bm A / Em D / G D /  
This star drew nigh to the northwest;  
A D / G D / A D / A7 D  
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
A D / Bm A / Em D / G D  
And there it did both stop and stay,  
A D G / D / A D / A D /  
Right over the place where Jesus lay.  
(chorus)

D / Bm A / Em D / G D /  
Then let us all with one accord  
A D / G D / A D / A7 D  
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;  
A D / Bm A / Em D / G D  
For Christ has our salvation wrought  
A D G / D / A D / A D /  
And with His blood mankind has bought:  
(chorus)

# 14. While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

Words by Nahum Tate, 1700.  
Public domain.

Capo 3

          D /       A       /       G       /       D  
While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
A D /    A E A       / /  
All seated on the ground,  
/ G /       / D A       /       F#  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
/ A Bm /       A D       / / /  
And glory shone around.

          D /       A       /       G       /       D  
"Fear not," said he (for mighty dread  
A D       /       A E A       / /  
had seized their troubled mind);  
/ G /       / D A       /       F#  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
/ A Bm /       A D       / / /  
To you and all mankind."

          D /       A       /       G       /       D  
"To you in David's town this day  
A D       /       A E A       / /  
Is born of David's line  
/ G /       / D A       /       F#  
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,  
/ A Bm /       A D       / / /  
And this shall be the sign:"

D / A / G / D  
"The heavenly babe you there shall find  
A D / A E A / /  
To human view displayed,  
/ G / / D A / F#  
All meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,  
/ A Bm / A D / / /  
And in a manger laid."

D / A / G / D  
Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith  
A D / A E A / /  
Appeared a shining throng  
/ G / / D A / F#  
Of angels praising God, who thus  
/ A Bm / A D / / /  
Addressed their joyful song:

D / A / G / D  
"All glory be to God on high,  
A D / A E A / /  
And to the earth be peace:  
/ G / / D A / F#  
Good will to men from highest heav'n  
/ A Bm / A D / / /  
Begin and never cease."