Bluegrass Jam Etiquette

The Handsome Ladies 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Through opportunity and resources, we support and encourage women bluegrassers of all levels, promoting the advancement of the individual musician within an inspired and connected community.

Thehandsomeladies.org
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Calling or Leading a song

1. Introduce the song
   Title & Key

2. Mention any irregularities
   Does it have a 2 chord?
   Does it go to the 4 on the chorus?

3. Determine Harmony Parts
   Request harmony singers if you desire them

4. Kick off
   Communicate your plan:
   Who will kick it? Full kick or 1,5,1 kick off?

5. Passing Breaks
   (after each chorus or between verses if no chorus)
   Pass breaks in a timely fashion with eye contact,
   or verbally by name or by instrument

6. End the song
   During last chorus or verse, extend your foot to
   signal end of song or use a circular motion with
   guitar, foot, or body to signal a turn-around

"You’re a composer not a performer"

Responsible jamming when someone else is leading a song

1. Who’s calling/leading the next song?
   Song title? Key? Re-tune if necessary

2. Are there any irregularities?
   Is there a 2 chord? Does it go to the 4 in the chorus?

3. Does the leader want harmonies?
   If you know the tenor or baritone, inform the leader

4. Who’s going to kick the song?
   Full kick off or a 1,5,1 kick-off?

5. Who’s taking the next break?
   The song leader will pass breaks
   (after each chorus or between verses if no chorus)
   - Be ready to take your break when signaled: Keep eye
     contact with leader so that they can pass the break to you if
     they want to. This is your chance to pass if you prefer to not
     take a break, make it clear to the leader with eye contact
   - Be aware of the person taking their break and
     play an appropriate volume for back-up

6. Is it time to end the song?
   The song leader will extend their foot to signal the last
   chorus or the song leader will make a circular motion
   with their instrument or foot to signal a turn-around

The Taboos

1. Singing in unison
2. Noodling between songs
3. Calling a song you don’t know
4. Playing out of tune
5. Rushing/Dragging the song
6. Calling a “jam buster”