

Foundations 101

Course Syllabus

Foundations Program — 24-Lesson Curriculum

Duration: 12 Weeks

Instruction: 2 lessons per week

Culminating Event: Student Recital — **Saturday, December 19th, 2026, 12-2 PM**

Program Description

The Foundations Program is a 12-week introductory piano course designed to give students a strong foundation in piano technique, music literacy, rhythm, harmony, ear training, and performance.

Students will not simply learn *where the notes are*. They will learn how to read, understand, hear, and create music at the piano.

By the conclusion of the program, students will have developed the foundational skills necessary to continue into more advanced piano study, including gospel/church music, contemporary repertoire, music production, or continued popular piano study.

WEEK 1 — GETTING STARTED

Lesson 1 — Piano Assessment & Musical Goals

Objective

Students will establish their starting skill level, identify personal musical goals, and become familiar with the structure and expectations of the Foundations Program.

Topics

- Student introduction
- Musical background
- Favorite music/artists
- Previous piano experience

- Musical goals
- Introduction to the piano
- Course expectations

Activities

- Informal playing assessment
- High/low keyboard exploration
- Teacher demonstration
- Student goal-setting

Musician's Challenge

"Tell Me Your Why" — Students explain why they want to learn piano and identify one thing they hope to accomplish by the end of the course.

Lesson 2 — Meet Your Piano

Objective

Students will identify the basic layout of the keyboard and understand how the pattern of black keys helps locate notes.

Topics

- White keys
- Black keys
- Groups of 2 and 3
- Octaves
- Middle C

Exercises

- Black Key Detective
- Find Every C
- Keyboard Treasure Hunt

Homework

Practice locating C, D, E, F, G, A, and B.

Musician's Challenge

Find Middle C in 5 seconds or less.

WEEK 2 — TECHNIQUE FOUNDATIONS

Lesson 3 — Posture & Hand Position

Objective

Students will demonstrate proper posture, seating position, relaxed wrists, and appropriate hand shape.

Warm-Up

- Shoulder relaxation
- Wrist circles
- Finger taps
- Five-finger air exercise

Activities

- Proper bench height
- Distance from keyboard
- Curved fingers
- Relaxed wrists
- Finger independence

Homework

Practice correct posture every time you sit at the piano.

Musician's Challenge

The "Perfect Position" Challenge: Sit at the piano, establish proper posture, and hold your hand position for 30 seconds.

Lesson 4 — Finger Numbers & Five-Finger Patterns

Objective

Students will identify finger numbers and perform basic five-finger patterns with both hands.

Topics

- Finger numbers 1–5
- Right vs. left hand
- Five-finger position
- Finger independence

Exercises

- 1-2-3-4-5
- 5-4-3-2-1
- Finger taps
- Alternating fingers

Homework

Five-finger pattern, 5 repetitions per hand.

Musician's Challenge

Play the five-finger pattern without looking at your hands.

WEEK 3 — KEYBOARD GEOGRAPHY & MUSICAL ALPHABET

Lesson 5 — Finding Notes on the Keyboard

Objective

Students will locate all seven natural notes across the keyboard.

Activities

- Note scavenger hunt
- Find every C
- Find every F
- Landmark note game

Exercise

Teacher calls a note; student finds it.

Homework

Practice locating randomly selected notes.

Musician's Challenge

60-Second Keyboard Challenge: Find as many requested notes as possible in one minute.

Lesson 6 — The Musical Alphabet

Objective

Students will understand the repeating A–G musical alphabet and identify ascending and descending note patterns.

Activities

- Alphabet forward
- Alphabet backward
- Ascending/descending
- Step vs. skip

Exercise

Complete missing-note sequences:

A – B – ___ – D

G – F – ___ – D

Musician's Challenge

Say the musical alphabet backward from G to A.

WEEK 4 — RHYTHM

Lesson 7 — Pulse & Steady Beat

Objective

Students will demonstrate the ability to maintain a steady pulse.

Warm-Ups

- Marching
- Clapping
- Body percussion
- Metronome exercises

Activities

- What is a beat?
- Tempo
- Steady vs. unsteady beat

Musician's Challenge

Maintain a steady beat at 60 BPM for one full minute.

Lesson 8 — Note Values & Counting

Objective

Students will identify and perform basic rhythmic values.

Topics

- Whole notes
- Half notes
- Quarter notes
- Rests

Exercises

- Rhythm echo
- Clap/count
- Rhythm creation
- Metronome practice

Homework

Practice assigned rhythm patterns daily.

Musician's Challenge

Create a four-beat rhythm and perform it for someone at home.

WEEK 5 — MUSIC READING

Lesson 9 — Introduction to the Treble Clef

Objective

Students will identify basic treble-clef notes and connect them to the keyboard.

Topics

- Staff
- Lines
- Spaces
- Treble clef
- FACE
- EGBDF

Exercises

- Note naming
- Note matching
- Keyboard mapping

Musician's Challenge

Name 10 treble-clef notes correctly.

Lesson 10 — Introduction to the Bass Clef

Objective

Students will identify basic bass-clef notes and connect them to the keyboard.

Topics

- Bass clef
- Spaces: ACEG
- Lines: GBDFA
- Landmark notes

Exercises

- Note flashcards
- Note matching
- Bass-clef keyboard mapping

Musician's Challenge: Identify five bass-clef notes without assistance.

WEEK 6 — SIGHT READING

Lesson 11 — Reading Five-Finger Melodies

Objective

Students will read and perform simple five-finger melodies using correct rhythm and note direction.

Activities

- Landmark note identification
- Step/skip recognition
- Rhythm review
- Five-finger melodies

Musician's Challenge

Perform a five-note melody without stopping.

Lesson 12 — Sight Reading Strategies

Objective

Students will develop a basic sight-reading routine.

Strategy

STOP → LOOK → COUNT → PLAY

Students learn to look for:

- Clef
- Key signature
- Time signature
- Starting note
- Rhythm
- Direction

Musician's Challenge

Sight-read a short melody they've never played before.

WEEK 7 — SCALES & TECHNIQUE

Lesson 13 — Introduction to Scales

Objective

Students will understand what a scale is and perform the C Major scale with appropriate fingering.

Topics

- Whole steps
- Half steps
- Scale structure
- C Major

Exercises

- Five-finger patterns
- C Major hands separately
- Scale fragments

Musician's Challenge

Play C Major correctly three times in a row.

Lesson 14 — Scale Technique & Finger Independence

Objective

Students will improve scale fluency, finger independence, and coordination.

Exercises

- C Major scale
- Accent patterns
- Rhythmic variations
- Contrary motion

Musician's Challenge

Play the C Major scale while maintaining even rhythm and relaxed hands.

WEEK 8 — CHORDS & HARMONY

Lesson 15 — Building Chords

Objective

Students will construct basic major triads.

Topics

- Root
- Third
- Fifth
- Major triad

Chords

C Major
F Major
G Major

Exercise

Build each chord using note cards and then play it.

Musician's Challenge

Build a C Major chord without looking at a chord chart.

Lesson 16 — Chord Progressions

Objective

Students will understand and perform a basic I–IV–V–I progression.

Progression

C → F → G → C

Activities

- Chord transitions
- Block chords
- Broken chords
- Rhythm patterns

Musician's Challenge: Play C–F–G–C smoothly without stopping.

WEEK 9 — TWO-HAND PLAYING

Lesson 17 — Hand Coordination

Objective

Students will coordinate simple patterns between the left and right hands.

Exercises

- Alternating hands
- RH melody/LH bass
- LH chords/RH melody
- Repeated patterns

Musician's Challenge

Perform a two-hand exercise three times without stopping.

Lesson 18 — Applying Chords to Songs

Objective

Students will use basic chords to accompany a simple melody.

Activities

- Melody + chord
- Chord changes
- Keeping steady tempo
- Listening while playing

Musician's Challenge

Play a simple song from beginning to end using both hands.

WEEK 10 — EAR TRAINING

Lesson 19 — Playing by Ear

Objective

Students will develop the ability to identify and reproduce simple musical patterns by listening.

Exercises

- High vs. low
- Same vs. different
- Melody echo
- Two-note patterns
- Short melodic phrases

Musician's Challenge

Figure out the first few notes of a familiar song without looking at music.

Lesson 20 — Chord Recognition

Objective

Students will begin recognizing basic chord qualities and common chord movement by ear.

Activities

- Major vs. minor listening
- C vs. F vs. G
- Chord progression identification
- Call and response

Musician's Challenge

Identify three chords by ear.

WEEK 11 — MUSICAL EXPRESSION

Lesson 21 — Dynamics & Expression

Objective

Students will understand and apply basic dynamics and expressive markings.

Topics

- Piano
- Forte
- Crescendo
- Decrescendo
- Phrasing

- Articulation

Exercises

Play the same melody:

- Soft
- Loud
- Gradually louder
- Gradually softer

Musician's Challenge

Perform a song using at least three different expressive elements.

Lesson 22 — Performance Skills

Objective

Students will develop confidence, stage presence, and performance etiquette.

Activities

- Entering the performance space
- Sitting at the piano
- Introducing yourself
- Introducing your piece
- Performing
- Receiving applause
- Exiting

Musician's Challenge

Perform your recital piece for at least one person at home.

WEEK 12 — RECITAL PREPARATION

Lesson 23 — Recital Rehearsal I

Objective

Students will perform their selected recital piece from beginning to end while receiving targeted feedback.

Focus

- Accuracy
- Rhythm
- Technique
- Memory
- Dynamics
- Expression

Activities

- Full performance
- Problem-area isolation
- Slow practice
- Performance simulation

Musician's Challenge

Perform your piece three times during the week for an audience.

Lesson 24 — Final Rehearsal & Recital Readiness

Objective

Students will demonstrate readiness to perform their recital selection confidently and independently.

Final Checklist

- I know my starting note.
- I know my rhythm.
- I know my fingerings.
- I can recover if I make a mistake.
- I know my dynamics.
- I can introduce my piece.
- I can perform without stopping.

The Performance Challenge

Perform your recital piece as though you are already on stage. Introduce yourself, announce your piece, perform it, and take your final bow.

Culminating Student Recital

Saturday, December 19th, 2026
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Students will perform a piece of their choosing that has been approved by the instructor.

The recital is the culmination of the Foundations Program and gives students the opportunity to demonstrate the musical knowledge, technical skills, confidence, and performance ability developed throughout the course.

Foundations Program Final Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the 24-lesson program, students should be able to:

Technique

- Demonstrate proper posture and hand position.
- Use basic finger numbers and fingering patterns.
- Perform the C Major scale.

Music Literacy

- Identify notes on the keyboard.
- Read basic treble and bass clef notation.
- Read simple rhythmic patterns.
- Sight-read basic five-finger melodies.

Musicianship

- Maintain a steady beat.
- Understand basic note values.
- Construct basic major triads.
- Perform simple chord progressions.
- Demonstrate beginning ear-training skills.

Performance

- Play a simple piece using both hands.
- Apply dynamics and musical expression.
- Introduce a performance piece.
- Perform confidently before an audience.

Personal Development

Most importantly, students should leave the Foundations Program with a stronger sense of confidence, discipline, creativity, and curiosity about music.

The goal isn't simply to produce students who can play one song.

The goal is to give them the foundation to become musicians.

CL Entertainment Piano Studio

Developing Musicians. Building Confidence. Inspiring Excellence.