

**LEADER GUIDE**  
**ELEMENTARY • HOLIDAY YEAR 2**



**ELEMENTARY**

**HOLIDAY YEAR 2**

# LEADER GUIDE



Loveland, Colorado  
[group.com/SimplyLoved](http://group.com/SimplyLoved)

**Group**



## Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:

### Relational

Person-to-person interaction enhances spiritual growth and builds Christian friendships.

### Experiential

What we experience through action and discussion sticks with us up to 9 times longer than what we simply hear or read.

### Applicable

The aim of ministry is to equip people to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

### Lifelong

Experiences transform the heart, moving faith beyond the walls of church and into everyday life for years to come.



## Leader Guide Elementary—Holiday Year 2

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# Contents

**Welcome to Simply Loved!**..... 4  
    How It Works ..... 5  
    Our Strategic Approach..... 7  
    Helping Elementary Kids Become Rooted in Faith..... 8  
    Supply Closet Inventory.....9  
    Take-It-Home Flyer Tips.....10

**Christmas**

Lesson 1: Mary and Joseph Travel to Bethlehem ..... 11  
Lesson 2: Shepherds Hear the Good News.....23

**Palm Sunday**

Lesson 3: People Celebrate Jesus .....33

**Easter**

Lesson 4: Jesus Is Alive!.....43



# Welcome to Simply Loved!

Welcome to Simply Loved Sunday school—where you and your team simply experience God’s love and share it with kids.

“Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.”

(1 John 4:11-12)

With Simply Loved, you, your helpers (we call them Crew Guides), and your kids explore a foundational, Jesus-centered journey through God’s story of Love. We believe that faith isn’t a subject to be mastered; it’s a relationship to grow! So every single component of Simply Loved sets the stage for you to more intentionally grow friendship with Jesus and each other. Keep reading to find out what that’ll look like in *your* classroom.

Join our Simply Loved Facebook community to learn from children’s ministry leaders just like you!

 [facebook.com/groups/simplylovedteacherslounge](https://www.facebook.com/groups/simplylovedteacherslounge)



# How It Works

## Simple Volunteer Roles



You'll need the following volunteers:

**Leader:** (That's you!) The one person in each teaching space who has looked over the lesson and will direct all activities. The glance-able, structured lessons in this guide allow leaders to spend more time interacting with kids and less time glued to scripts.

**Crew Guide:** A helper who simply shows up and participates with kids. Crew Guides don't need to be Bible experts—simply people who love Jesus and kids!

## A Simple, Flexible Lesson!

### Simple Prep for Leaders

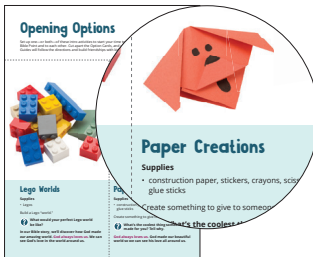
Prepare your heart and pray for the kids before each lesson. Plus, check off supplies as you gather them!



**Prayer**  
God, your awesome name fills the earth. It's amazing to think that you created me. Thank you for caring for the kids today. May they see your love in the world and in my life. Amen.

### Opening Options

Choose from two opening activities—both introduce the day's Bible Point. Each unit creatively uses the same supplies all four weeks. That means you'll need to gather Opening Options supplies only once a month! If you'd like, set up these Opening Options as activity stations in your room. Simply cut apart the cards you'll find in each lesson and place one at each station to guide activity and conversation. Or, do one or both activities with all kids together. You choose!



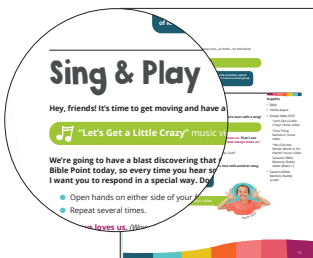
#### Paper Creations

**Supplies**  
• construction paper, stickers, crayons, scissors  
• glue sticks

Create something to give to someone else.

### Sing & Play

Gather kids to sing and discover the Bible Point. Plus, a Bible Memory Buddy connects the Bible verse to kids' everyday lives.



#### Sing & Play

Hey, friends! It's time to get moving and have a blast!

🎵 "Let's Get a Little Crazy" music video

We're going to have a blast discovering that Bible Point today, so every time you hear the song, I want you to respond in a special way. Do you want to try?

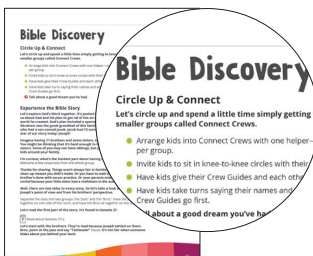
• Open hands on either side of your head.

• Repeat several times.

• Sing about a good dream you've had.

### Bible Discovery

We've given you lots of options, but don't skip this part! It's the "meat" of the lesson where kids experience God's greatest gift in an interactive, hands-on way. There's no time to be bored as kids and Connect Crews follow the Leader through a memorable Bible experience. You'll read directly from the Bible throughout the Bible Discovery, so be sure to mark your place ahead of time and choose a kid-friendly translation to read from.



#### Bible Discovery

**Circle Up & Connect**

Let's circle up and spend a little time simply getting to know each other.

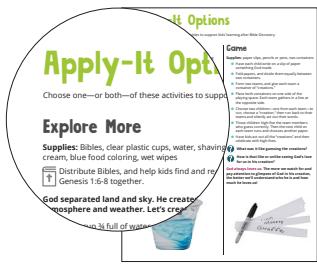
• Arrange kids into Connect Crews with one helper per group.

• Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Crew Guides.

• Have kids give their Crew Guides and each other a thumbs up.

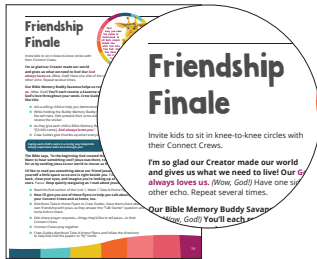
• Have kids take turns saying their names and their Crew Guides go first.

• Sing about a good dream you've had.



## Apply-It Options

Consider your time frame, and take your pick: a game or an activity that lets kids practice Bible skills! Each option applies the Bible Point to everyday kid life.



## Friendship Finale

Wrap up your lesson with a gospel-centered Jesus connection, and equip kids to continue faith conversations at home! Plus, affirm kids by name as you give each child a Bible Memory Buddy sticker at the end of each lesson.

## A Simple, Flexible Format!

### Age-Graded Classrooms

It's simple! You'll need one prepared leader and at least one helper (we call helpers Crew Guides) for each teaching space. We recommend having a media player handy in each space for music and each week's Bible Memory Buddy video.

### Age-Graded Classrooms With a Multi-Age Opening

It's simple! Lead the Sing & Play section with all ages together. Set up a media player in your gathering area so that when you're all together, you can sing along with music videos, introduce the Bible Point, and meet the Bible Memory Buddy! Then, disperse to age-graded classrooms for Bible Discovery, Apply-It Options, and the Friendship Finale. You'll need one prepared leader and at least one helper (we call helpers Crew Guides) for each teaching space.

### One (big or small) Room With Multi-Age Kids

It's simple! You'll need one prepared leader plus at least one helper (we call helpers Crew Guides). Ideally, you'll have one Crew Guide for every five to eight kids, but it can work with your church's volunteer-to-children ratios. We recommend having a media player handy for music and each week's Bible Memory Buddy video.



# Our Strategic Approach

There are “whys” behind every lesson component, and we want to share them with you! Here are the guiding principles behind the creation of Simply Loved Sunday school curriculum.

You may have heard...	But we've found...	That's why...
“It’s hard to recruit volunteers.”	When volunteers need less prep time, have fun, and feel like they’re making a difference, they’ll make serving a priority.	Simply Loved volunteer roles are important, but easy!
“Kids need to be entertained.”	Kids need to be noticed and loved.	Simply Loved lessons are designed to help you listen to kids and get to know them.
“You need a lot of supplies.”	You need only a few supplies used in creative ways.	Simply Loved incorporates minimal supplies each unit but uses them in innovative ways to introduce and apply the day’s lesson.
“We need helpers—any warm body will do.”	Helpers don’t just assist. Even though they don’t need to prep, they serve an important relational purpose and make a big difference in kids’ lives.	Simply Loved helpers have a name and an elevated role: they’re “Crew Guides”! They participate along with the kids, play a meaningful role in lessons, and make a difference by building friendships with kids.
“Kids are rarely able to remember Scripture.”	Creating a visual and emotional connection to Scripture dramatically helps kids remember and understand why the Bible matters in their everyday lives.	Simply Loved incorporates kid-friendly videos featuring Bible Memory Buddies (animals God created) to help them understand Bible truths and trigger Scripture memory. And Bible Memory Buddies help discoveries stick! (wink, wink)
“Teachers are Bible experts.”	Teachers are channels of friendship who help children understand and experience Jesus’ love.	Simply Loved uses human relationships to communicate God’s love in a tangible way. Built-in conversation starters help teachers share their personal stories and their own friendship with Jesus.
“Covering a lot of information is intimidating.”	Reaching children is simple when you focus on one Bible Point.	Simply Loved repeats key Bible Points in different ways so truths sink deep. And it combines the repetition of a Bible Point with an auditory and physical response that will stick with kids long after your lesson ends.
“Success requires getting through the whole lesson.”	You’ll clearly communicate the key Bible Point no matter how far you get.	With Simply Loved, a palette of Bible-Point-supporting options gives you the freedom to choose what works for your kids and your time frame. So no matter how much of the lesson you complete, the Truth from God’s Word shines through.
“Kids’ll get bored if you repeat something they’ve heard before.”	Kids appreciate routine and repetition when it’s done in a fun way.	Simply Loved’s scope and sequence intentionally repeats the Bible verse and Point for four weeks. This strategically cements Bible learning no matter how often kids attend.



# Helping Elementary Kids Become Rooted in Faith

As their Leader, you get to show elementary-age children what loving Jesus looks like! And Simply Loved will help. Simply Loved incorporates the following Age-Level Teaching Tips to create a rich environment where elementary kids grow a lasting friendship with Jesus.

## Go Deeper

As kids get older, we may be tempted to throw more Bible stories and Bible information at them. But elementary kids don't need more things to learn; they need to dig deeper into the truths they've been introduced to. That's why Simply Loved explores one Bible Point for four weeks and why open-ended questions meet kids right where they are—no matter their grade or prior knowledge of the Bible.

## Make It Fun

You know, we often differentiate between “fun” and the “meat” of our lessons. We think that if we incorporate a game or free play, then we're making time for fun. But with Simply Loved, Bible discoveries are as fun as game time, and prayers are as fun as videos!

## Keep It Simple

Kids benefit from messages that are short, sweet, and relevant to their everyday lives. That's why Simply Loved Bible lessons center around one short, simple, memorable Bible Point. Repetition cements learning, so repeating Bible truths helps kids remember them when they need it the most.

## Build Friendships

Friendship matters to elementary kids. So Simply Loved builds friendships by allowing time for kids to talk and get to know each other. Plus, Simply Loved encourages you to break up into smaller groups called Connect Crews. That way each child is seen and known, and when a question is asked, everyone has a chance to talk and share.

## Be Authentic

In order to build real friendships with kids, you need to let them see leaders as real people. That's why, when asking a question, Simply Loved encourages Leaders and Crew Guides to share from their own lives first and model the answer. When *you* go first, you're honestly telling kids about your own struggles and experiences—and even hard-to-reach kids will follow your lead.

## Connect to Emotion

God has wired us with emotions, and the Bible is filled with stories of real people who experienced fear, sadness, joy, doubt, fatigue, and confusion. That's why Simply Loved identifies and evokes key emotions each week. Connecting to emotion cements learning and helps elementary kids know that Jesus understands their feelings and is with them, no matter what.

## Point Out Kids' Purpose

Kids don't need to wait until they're grown up to fulfill God's purpose for their lives; they can do it right now! That's why Simply Loved intentionally incorporates time each week for Leaders to affirm and encourage kids as they grow closer to Jesus.

# Supply Closet Inventory

## Elementary—Holiday Year 2

Have these items handy for some hands-on fun!

### Program Essentials

- Bibles
- Music Video DVD*\*
- Buddy Video DVD*\*
- Bible Story posters\*
- Bible Memory Buddy poster\*
- Bible Memory Buddy stickers\*
- Take-It-Home Flyers\*
- media player

### Art Supplies

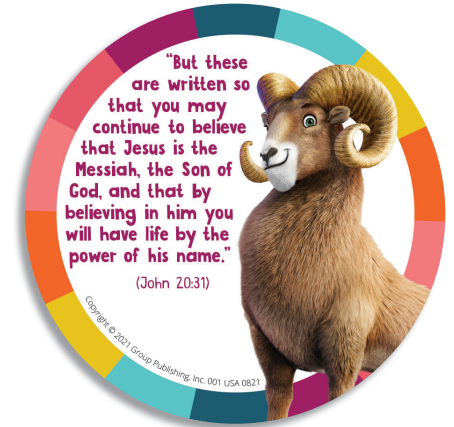
- child-safe scissors
- construction paper
- glue sticks
- markers
- paper
- pens
- pencils
- tape

### Toys & Goodies

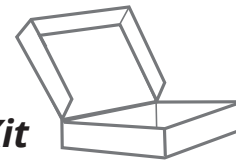
- balloons

### Odds & Ends

- Christmas garland
- Christmas tree ornaments
- crepe paper streamers
- gift bows
- ribbon
- tissue paper



\* in your **Simply Loved Kit**



# Take-It-Home Flyer Tips


Follow these steps to get Take-It Home Flyers off the ground effectively so they'll cruise on a direct flight home.

1. Follow your Simply Loved Leader Guide. The end of each elementary lesson is strategically written to incorporate these flyers.
2. Read the first page to your whole group of kids first. This is meant to be a quiet prayer time that intentionally connects kids to their friend Jesus.
3. Next, ask the "Talk Starter" question aloud, and give time for kids to discuss and pray in Connect Crews.
4. THEN, *and only then*, distribute Take-It-Home Flyers to kids. If you choose to forgo this strategic order, prepare to have papers whizzing by your head before you're ready for them.
5. Be sure to point out the challenge on the top of the folding instructions page. That'll *really* motivate kids to make sure this page gets home.
6. Be sure to give each helper a copy, too—not to fold for themselves, but so kids can reference the instructions once folding begins.

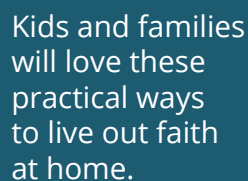
## Prepare for takeoff!

Help your ministry to families really take off with these specially crafted Take-It-Home Flyers. After reading each Jesus-centered flyer and talking with their Connect Crews, kids will follow the directions and fold these flyers into 3-D masterpieces!

Once home, they'll transport meaningful opportunities for Jesus-centered family fun.



Cool questions help family members tell stories about their own friendship with Jesus!



Kids and families will love these practical ways to live out faith at home.



After kids make Bible discoveries at church, families can explore more about each lesson's Bible content at home.

# Mary and Joseph Travel to Bethlehem

Bible Point

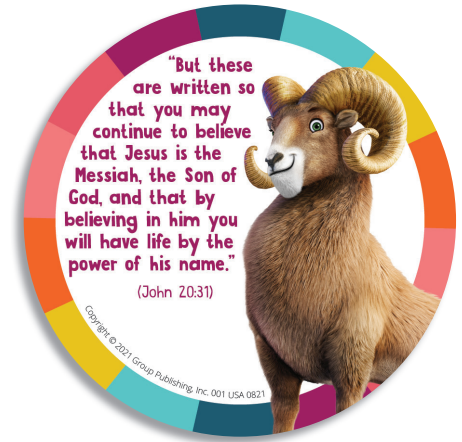
**Jesus is good news...for people who feel like nobodies.**

## Purpose

Elementary kids know who's who. They keep track of the biggest names in sports, music, and online. So they may feel unimportant or like their lives pale in comparison to the "somebodies" they see on screens. Perhaps you feel that way sometimes, too. This lesson will tell them—and you—the good news: Jesus shows God's love to everyone. To God, nobody is a nobody.

Think about it: Mary and Joseph weren't royalty. They weren't important political figures. They didn't have high status or wealth. They were just ordinary people, sent on a long, hard journey for a census so they could pay taxes. But they were a special part of God's big plan.

Guess what! God has a plan for your time with kids today. As their leader, you're a "somebody" to them. You play a crucial, loving role in kids' lives, and Jesus, our Immanuel, is with you each step of the way.



## Prayer

Jesus, thank you for giving up your place in heaven to humble yourself as a tiny baby here on earth. Thank you that you became like a nobody to make me a somebody who can share your love with others. In your name, amen.

## Prep

Opening Options	Sing & Play	Bible Discovery & Friendship Finale	Apply-It Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Option Cards*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Christmas Ribbons</i>: gift bows, ribbon, child-safe scissors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Crumpled Paper Christmas</i>: construction paper, tissue paper, tape, glue sticks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> countdown video*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Music Video DVD</i>*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Buddy Video DVD</i>*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ramsey Bible Memory Buddy poster*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> media player</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark John 20:31)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Mary and Joseph Travel to Bethlehem" Bible Story poster*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ramsey Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Week 1) (1 per child)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Luke 2:1, 6-7)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> paper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> pens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More</i>: Bibles, Christmas tree ornaments, Christmas garland</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game</i>: gift bow</li> </ul>

\* in your *Simply Loved Kit*



# Opening Options

Set up one—or both—of these intro activities to start your time together. Each activity connects kids to the Bible Point and to each other. Cut apart these Option Cards, and place one by each activity you choose. Crew Guides will follow the directions and build friendships with kids as they make discoveries together!



## Christmas Ribbons

**Supplies:** gift bows, ribbon, child-safe scissors

Use gift bows and ribbon to create the shape of a Christmas-themed item. Let other people guess what you made!

**?** What's your favorite thing about Christmas?

There are so many exciting things to celebrate at Christmas. And the most exciting thing to celebrate is Jesus' birth! Today we'll discover why **Jesus is good news**.

## Crumpled Paper Christmas

**Supplies:** construction paper, tissue paper, tape, glue sticks

Tear small pieces of tissue paper and crumple them. Then glue the pieces onto construction paper to make a Christmas tree.

**?** Tell about Christmas decorations in your house.

We usually crumple paper to throw it away. In today's Bible story, we'll see how people who felt unimportant—like crumpled paper—turned out to be really important! That's because **Jesus is good news**, even when we feel like nobodies.

# Opening

Now's a great time for Opening Options. Choose one—or both—to introduce today's Bible discoveries.



countdown video (1 minute)

Help kids transition, clean up the activities, and sit with Connect Crews. A Connect Crew is a small group of kids with one Crew Guide.

## Sing & Play

Merry Christmas, everyone! I'm so glad you're here with me today to celebrate Jesus' birth. Jesus was *no* ordinary baby. Jesus is our king!



"Here Is Our King" music video

### Bible Point

Christmas is an exciting time. There are so many pretty decorations, presents, and fun things to do!

But the *best* part of Christmas is Jesus! **Jesus is good news!** That's our Bible Point today. Every time you hear the words "**Jesus is good news,**" cup your hands in front of your mouth like a megaphone (demonstrate) and say, "Celebrate Jesus!" Let's try that together.

- Hold your hands like a megaphone as you say, "Celebrate Jesus!"
- Repeat several times.

Repetition cements learning, so be sure to say today's Bible Point A LOT. Have fun with it! Kids will love listening for it and responding with "Celebrate Jesus!"

Have you ever needed good news? Maybe you were worried about a test score or a friend who was in trouble. Or perhaps your mom needed a new job, or your dad needed a good report from the doctor. Take a moment and think—when have you needed good news? Pause for a few moments, then ask if anyone would like to share about the hard time they were thinking about.

### Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Music Video* DVD
  - "Here Is Our King" music video
  - "O Little Town of Bethlehem" music video
  - "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" music video
- *Buddy Video* DVD
  - Ramsey Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)
- Ramsey Bible Memory Buddy poster



Celebrate Jesus!

Hard times make us feel all sorts of things. Hope, fear, worry. But even as we wait and wonder, there's good news. Jesus is with us. The good news of Jesus may not make everything okay right away, but it does mean we're never alone. That's why **Jesus is good news**. (*Celebrate Jesus!*)

Let's pray and talk with Jesus about these times.






Dear Jesus, you know all about us and the hard times we face. Thank you that we are never alone and that you love us and are with us. Amen.

The good news about Jesus was first shared many years ago outside a town called Bethlehem. That's where Jesus was born—so let's sing about it!

 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" music video


## Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

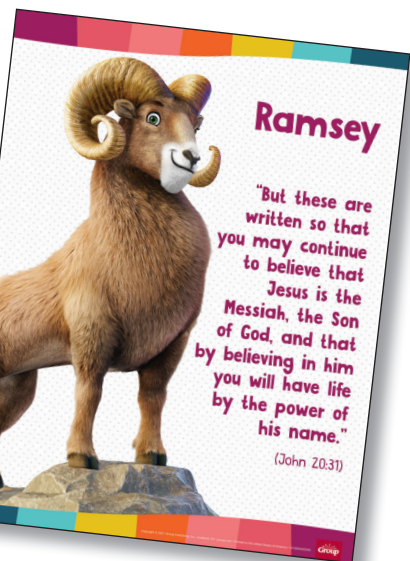
Ramsey is our Bible Memory Buddy! Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster. Ramsey is a bighorn sheep, which makes me wonder what his horns are used for. Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge! You'll hear two fun facts about bighorn sheep. It's up to you to decide which is true—this fact or that!

-  Do bighorn sheep use their horns to dig in the dirt for food or to defend their homes?
-  Have everyone get on all fours to vote for *this* (dig in the dirt) or stand up tall with arms up like horns to vote for *that* (defend their homes).
-  Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
-  Dramatically give the answer: **And the answer is...defend their homes! Let's find out more from Ramsey.**
-  Watch the Bible Memory Buddy video.

 Ramsey Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)

The Bible helps us see how God welcomes everyone who believes in Jesus.

 Show the Bible. **The Bible is God's true story of love! Even though God inspired people to write the Bible a long time ago, it still matters for us today.**



**Our Bible Memory Verse is John 20:31. Let's say the verse together. I'll say a line, and then you repeat it after me.**

**"But these are written** *(hold hands like an open book)*  
**so that you may continue to believe** *(place hands over heart)*  
**that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,** *(point middle finger into each palm for "Jesus")*  
**and that by believing in him** *(place hands over heart)*  
**you will have life by the power of his name."** *(sweep arms overhead and back down)*  
(John 20:31)

**Jesus is good news.** *(Celebrate Jesus!)* **Let's sing and tell the good news that Jesus Christ is born!**

As you teach sign language for "Jesus," tell kids that the sign reminds us of the nails put in Jesus' hands when he died on the cross to show God's great love for all people—including you and me!



**"Go, Tell It on the Mountain" music video**



# Keep your Sundays simple—and your kids delighted—with Simply Loved.

This Elementary Leader Guide provides a step-by-step, simple-to-follow plan for Simply Loved Holiday Year 2 lessons. Featuring memorable, hands-on, friendship-focused activities, each lesson easily adapts to your unique Sunday school format while guiding kids on a foundational, Jesus-centered journey through God's story of love.

## Holiday Bible Discoveries:

Unit/Week	Unit Theme	Lesson Theme
Christmas Week 1	<b>Jesus Is Good News!</b>	<b>Mary and Joseph Travel to Bethlehem</b> (Luke 2:1-7) Focus: Jesus is good news...for people who feel like nobodies.
Christmas Week 2		<b>Shepherds Hear the Good News</b> (Luke 2:8-20) Focus: Jesus is good news...for everyone.
Palm Sunday		<b>People Celebrate Jesus</b> (Luke 19:28-40) Focus: Let's celebrate...Jesus is good news.
Easter		<b>Jesus Is Alive!</b> (Matthew 27:45-28:10) Focus: Jesus is good news...forever.

 Join the Simply Loved Facebook community and learn from children's ministry leaders just like you! [facebook.com/groups/simplylovedteacherslounge](https://facebook.com/groups/simplylovedteacherslounge)



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