

LEADER GUIDE

ELEMENTARY • QUARTER 1



ELEMENTARY

QUARTER 1

LEADER GUIDE



Loveland, Colorado
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—Quarter 1

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Visit our website: group.com/SimplyLoved



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This creative team is simply honored to create Simply Loved for you:

Laura Baldwin-Stout, Mollie Bickert, Jody Brotsma, Adam Bohlmeyer, Jessica Goldsmith, Becky Helzer, Jennifer Hooks, Charity Kauffman, Mikal Keefer, Jan Kershner, Steve Kyle, Joani Schultz, Peggy Naylor, Jeff Storm, Rodney Stewart, and Andrea Zimmerman.

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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



How It Works

Simple Volunteer Roles



You'll need the following volunteers:

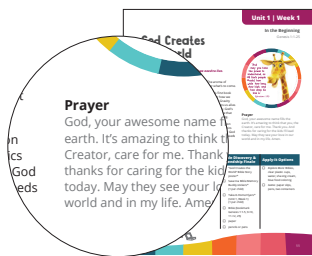
Leader: (That's you!) The one person in each teaching space who has looked over the lesson and will direct all activities. The glance-able, structured lessons in this guide allow leaders to spend more time interacting with kids and less time glued to scripts.

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!

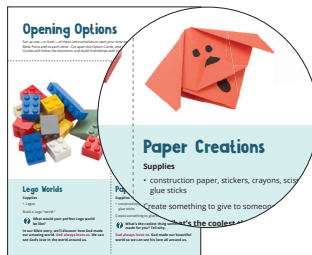
Simple Prep for Leaders

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



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!



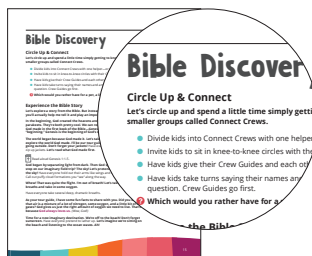
Sing & Play

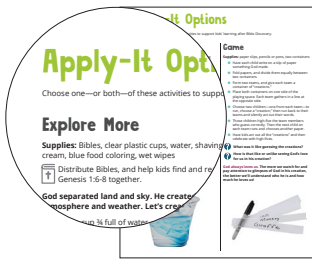
Gather kids to sing and discover the Bible Point. Plus, a Bible Memory Buddy connects the Bible verse to kids' everyday lives.



Bible Discovery

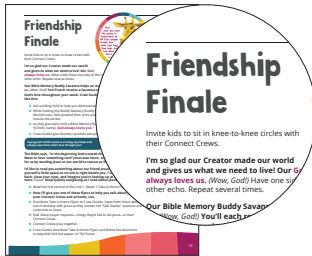
We've given you lots of options, but don't skip this part! It's the "meat" of the lesson where kids experience God's greatest gift in an interactive, hands-on way. There's no time to be bored as kids and Connect Crews follow the Leader through a memorable Bible experience. You'll read directly from the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





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—Quarter 1

Have these items handy for some hands-on fun this quarter!

Program Essentials

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

Art Supplies

- construction paper
- stickers
- crayons, including multicultural crayons
- child-safe scissors
- glue sticks
- masking tape
- chenille wires
- paper plates
- markers, regular and fine-tipped
- dry-erase markers
- yarn
- clear tape
- paper
- pencils or pens
- washable paint in various colors
- index cards
- craft sticks
- Glue Dots
- rubber bands

Toys & Goodies

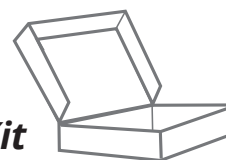
- Legos
- small toy cars
- small individually wrapped bags of Skittles (optional)
- small mirrors
- balloons
- timer (optional)
- water
- shaving cream
- blue food coloring
- aluminum foil
- baby name books, print or digital
- basketballs
- tennis balls
- handkerchief
- foam balls
- small plastic toys
- picture of a baby

Odds & Ends

- wet wipes
- tissues
- straight pins or thumbtacks
- clear plastic cups
- containers
- adhesive nametags
- resealable gallon-size bags



* 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.

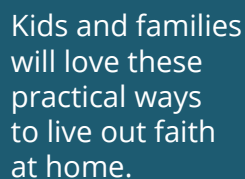
Prepare for takeoff!

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.

God Creates the World

Bible Point

God always loves us...and gives us all we need to live.

Purpose

How did your day begin? A buzzing alarm clock? The aroma of freshly brewed coffee? Beginnings set the tone for what’s to come.

The word *genesis* means “beginning” or “origins.” This first book of the Bible begins God’s story of love for us. Consider how we benefit from each microscopic detail of God’s creation. Gravity keeps us on the ground. Oxygen in the atmosphere keeps us alive. From the nutrients in vegetables to the cuddle of a puppy, God’s creation gives us life and shows us his unending love—love that ultimately sent Jesus to our world to give us a new beginning.

How does God’s creation affect elementary kids? Well, creation is filled with science, engineering, technology, and mathematics (STEM)—topics kids explore in school. Help kids discover that God created it all—not just for something to do, but to meet our needs and show us his goodness and love.



Prayer

God, your awesome name fills the earth. It’s amazing to think that you, the Creator, care for me. Thank you. And thanks for caring for the kids I’ll lead today. May they see your love in our world and in my life. Amen.

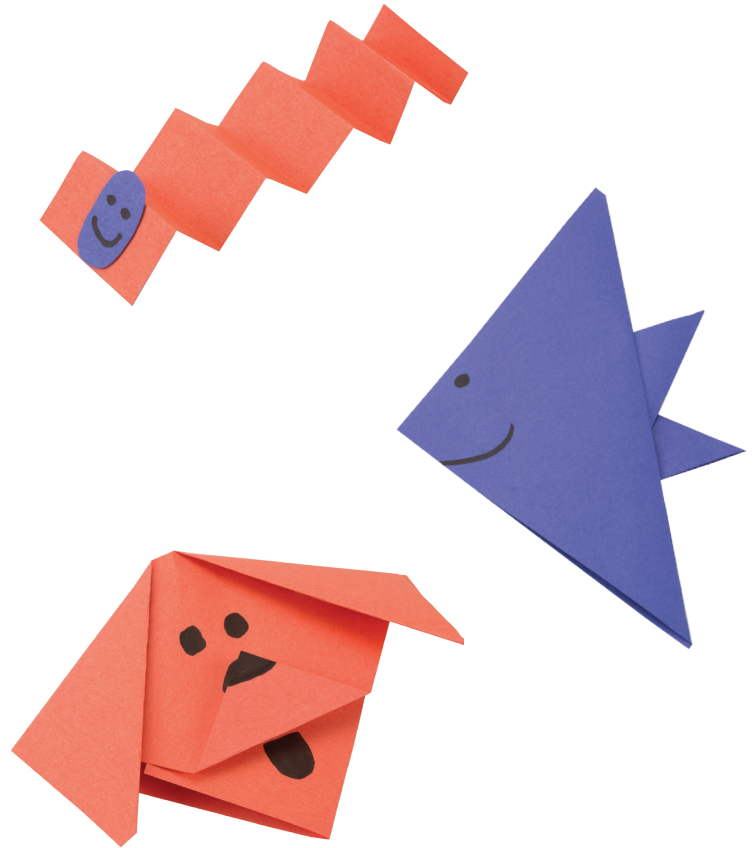
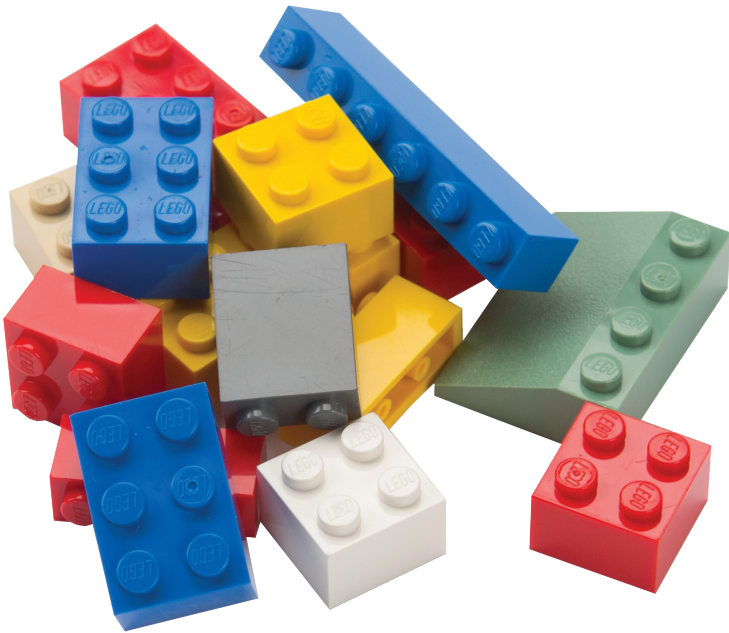
Prep

Opening Options	Sing & Play	Bible Discovery & Friendship Finale	Apply-It Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Option Cards* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lego Worlds</i>: Legos <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Paper Creations</i>: art supplies such as construction paper, stickers, crayons, scissors, glue sticks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> countdown video* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Buddy Video</i> DVD* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Music Video</i> DVD* <input type="checkbox"/> Savanna Bible Memory Buddy poster* <input type="checkbox"/> media player <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Ephesians 3:18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> “God Creates the World” Bible Story poster* <input type="checkbox"/> Savanna Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Unit 1, Week 1) (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Genesis 1:1-5, 9-10, 11-12, 25) <input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> pencils or pens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More</i>: Bibles, clear plastic cups, water, shaving cream, blue food coloring <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game</i>: paper slips, pens, 2 containers

* 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!



Lego Worlds

Supplies

- Legos

Build a Lego “world.”

? What would your perfect Lego world be like?

In our Bible story, we’ll discover how God made *our* amazing world. **God always loves us.** We can see God’s love in the world around us.

Paper Creations

Supplies

- construction paper, stickers, crayons, scissors, glue sticks

Create something to give to someone you love.

? What’s the coolest thing someone has made for you? Tell why.

God always loves us. God made our beautiful world so we can see his love all around us.

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

Hey, friends! It's time to get moving and have a little fun. Let's start with a song!



"Let's Get a Little Crazy" music video

Bible Point

We're going to have a blast discovering that **God always loves us**. That's our Bible Point today, so every time you hear someone say, "**God always loves us**," I want you to respond in a special way. Do what I do!

- Open hands on either side of your face and say, "Wow, God!"
- Repeat several times.

God always loves us. (*Wow, God!*) Let's celebrate God's love with another song.

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 "*Wow, God!*"

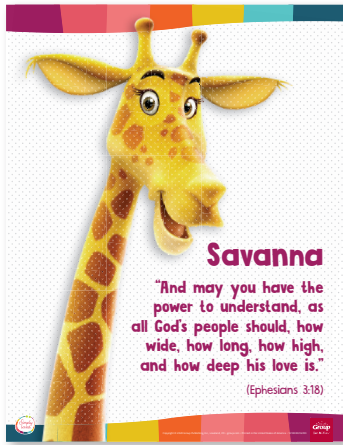


"God of the Stars" music video

Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Buddy Video* DVD
Savanna Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)
- *Music Video* DVD
"Let's Get a Little Crazy" music video
"God of the Stars" music video
"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" music video
- Savanna Bible Memory Buddy poster





Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

Let's meet our Bible Memory Buddy, **Savanna the giraffe!** Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster. **How much do you know about giraffes? Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge!** You'll hear two fun facts about giraffes. It's up to you to decide which one is true—this fact or that!

- ? Is a baby giraffe called a calf or a kid?**
- Have everyone moo like a cow to vote for *this* (a calf) or cry like a human baby to vote for *that* (a kid).
 - Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
 - Dramatically give the answer: **It's a calf!**
 - Watch the Bible Memory Buddy video to meet Savanna.



Savanna Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)



Show the Bible. **The Bible is God's true story of love! It's one big book that's filled with a bunch of little books. Our Bible Memory Verse comes from Ephesians 3:18. Let's say the verse together. I'll say a line, and then you repeat after me.**

"And may you have the power (*make muscles with arms*)
to understand, (*point to head*)
as all God's people should, (*sweep hands in front of you*)
how wide, (*spread arms wide*)
how long, (*move arm in front like tracing a long line*)
how high, (*stretch up with hand above head*)
and how deep (*crouch down*)
(God's) love is." (*hug yourself*)
(Ephesians 3:18)

God always loves us. (*Wow, God!*) **And he's got the whole world in his hands!**



"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" music video

Bible Discovery

Circle Up & Connect

Let's circle up and spend a little time simply getting to know each other in smaller groups called **Connect Crews**.

- Divide kids into Connect Crews with one helper—or Crew Guide—per group.
 - Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.
 - Have kids give their Crew Guides and each other fist bumps.
 - Have kids take turns saying their names and answering this question. Crew Guides go first.
- ❓ **Which would you rather have for a pet, a lion cub or a parakeet? Why?**

Experience the Bible Story

Let's explore a story from the Bible. But instead of just listening to a story, you'll actually help me tell it and play an important part!

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth—including lions *and* parakeets. They're both pretty cool. We can read about them and other things God made in the first book of the Bible—Genesis! The word *genesis* means "beginning." Genesis is the beginning of God's story of love for us.

The world began because God made it. Let's take an imaginary field trip and explore the world God made. I'll be our tour guide! First let's imagine we're going outside. Don't forget your jackets! Have everyone pretend to put on and zip up jackets. Let's read what God made first.



Read aloud Genesis 1:1-5.

God began by separating light from dark. Then God spoke and made sky. First stop on our imaginary field trip? The sky! Let's pretend we're soaring through the sky! Have everyone hold out their arms like wings and veer from side to side. Call out puffy cloud formations you "see" along the way.

Whew! That was quite the flight. I'm out of breath! Let's take a few deep breaths and take in some oxygen.

Have everyone take several deep, dramatic breaths.

As your tour guide, I have some fun facts to share with you. Did you know that air is a mixture of a lot of nitrogen, some oxygen, and a little bit of other gases? God gives us just the right amount of oxygen we need to live. That's because **God always loves us.** (*Wow, God!*)

Time for a new imaginary destination. We're off to the beach! Don't forget sunscreen. Have everyone pretend to lather up. Let's imagine we're sitting on the beach and listening to the ocean waves. Ah!

Supplies

- Bible
- "God Creates the World" Bible Story poster
- paper
- pencils or pens

We call helpers **Crew Guides**. If you lead a small class, you can be the Crew Guide. Simply circle up with the kids. If you have helpers, form smaller groups so each child can be known—and so kids can befriend your helpers, too!

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 Quarter 1 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.

This quarter’s Bible discoveries:

Unit/Week	Unit Theme	Lesson Theme
Unit 1/Week 1	In the Beginning— God always loves us.	God Creates the World (Genesis 1:1-25) Focus: God always loves us...and gives us all we need to live.
Unit 1/Week 2		God Creates People (Genesis 1:26-2:4) Focus: God always loves us...and gives us a special purpose.
Unit 1/Week 3		Sin Enters God’s World (Genesis 3:1-24) Focus: God always loves us...even when we want to be in charge.
Unit 1/Week 4		A Flood Covers the Earth (Genesis 6:9-9:17) Focus: God always loves us...and gives us do-overs.
Unit/Week	Unit Theme	Lesson Theme
Unit 2/Week 1	God Has a Plan— We can trust God.	God Calls Abram (Genesis 12:1-8; 15:1-6) Focus: We can trust God...even when we don’t understand.
Unit 2/Week 2		Isaac Is Born (Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7) Focus: We can trust God...because God keeps his promises.
Unit 2/Week 3		Jacob Steals Esau’s Blessing (Genesis 25:19-26; 27) Focus: We can trust God...because he’s in control.
Unit 2/Week 4		Jacob and Esau Make Peace (Genesis 32:3-12, 22-32; 33:1-11) Focus: We can trust God...to help us get along.
Unit/Week	Unit Theme	Lesson Theme
Unit 3/Week 1	Good News for Outsiders— Jesus loves everyone.	Shepherds Hear About Jesus’ Birth (Luke 2:8-20) Focus: Jesus loves everyone...even if we feel like outsiders.
Unit 3/Week 2		Jesus Befriends Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) Focus: Jesus loves everyone...and sees our potential.
Unit 3/Week 3		Jesus Welcomes Children (Luke 18:15-17) Focus: Jesus loves everyone...and pays attention to us.
Unit 3/Week 4		Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-42) Focus: Jesus loves everyone...and wants us to believe in him.

 Join the Simply Loved Facebook community and learn from children’s ministry leaders just like you! facebook.com/groups/simplylovedteacherslounge



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