

**LEADER GUIDE**  
**ELEMENTARY • QUARTER 7**



**ELEMENTARY**

**QUARTER 7**

# **LEADER GUIDE**





## 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 7

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Visit our website: [group.com/SimplyLoved](http://group.com/SimplyLoved)



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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](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.

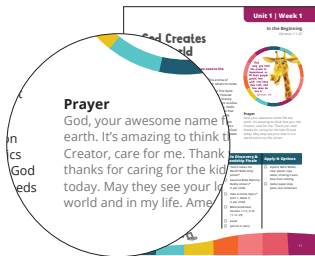
**Crew Guide:** A helper who simply shows up and participates with kids. Crew Guides don't need to be Bible experts—simply people who love Jesus and kids!



## A Simple, Flexible Lesson!

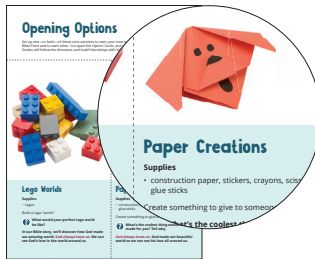
### Simple Prep for Leaders

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



### 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!



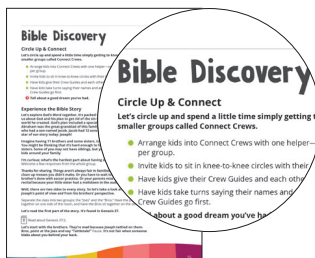
### Sing & Play

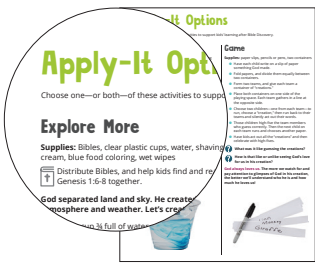
Gather kids to sing and discover the Bible Point. Plus, a Bible Memory Buddy connects the Bible verse to kids' everyday lives.



### Bible Discovery

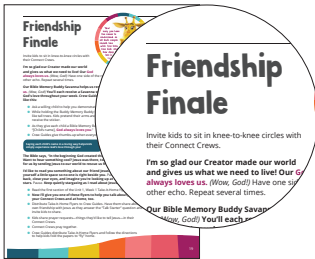
We've given you lots of options, but don't skip this part! It's the "meat" of the lesson where kids experience God's greatest gift in an interactive, hands-on way. There's no time to be bored as kids and Connect Crews follow the Leader through a memorable Bible experience. You'll read directly from the 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 7

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

### Program Essentials

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

### Art Supplies

- chenille wires
- child-safe scissors
- colored pencils
- construction paper
- craft sticks
- crayons, including multicultural crayons
- index cards
- paper
- pencils and pens
- permanent markers
- washable markers
- yarn

### Toys & Goodies

- baby doll
- balloons
- beanbags
- blocks
- play dough

### Odds & Ends

- bowls
- cotton balls
- cups
- dish soap
- drinking straws
- duct tape
- envelopes
- flashlight or smartphone
- gift wrap
- jars or containers with lids
- large bag
- large cardboard box
- liquid hand soap
- nametags
- painter's tape
- paper towels
- piece of fabric or blanket
- shallow tray
- small bottles of water
- sticky notes
- timer
- tissue paper
- trash can
- water
- white paper
- whiteboard with dry-erase markers and eraser



\* 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.

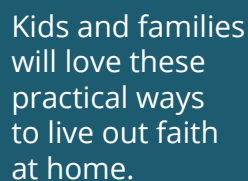
## Prepare for takeoff!

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.

# Nehemiah Returns to Jerusalem

Back Home Again  
Nehemiah 1-2:20

Bible Point

**God forgives us...and hears our prayers.**

## Purpose

When we pray, it's easy to launch right into a laundry list of requests: "Keep my kids safe. Provide money for rent. Bring healing."

God absolutely hears those prayers and loves to hear the concerns of our hearts. But God does so much more! God takes care of our sin problem and forgives us. There's nothing quite as freeing as coming to our Father with a clean, forgiven heart.

This lesson will help you, and the kids you lead, look to God for help when facing sad problems and trust that God's love and forgiveness is bigger than anything!



## Prayer

"O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unfailing love with those who love him and obey his commands, listen to my prayer!" (Nehemiah 1:5-6). May I show your love and grace to your kids today. In Jesus' 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>Play Dough Pleas</i>: play dough, pencils</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cup-Bearers</i>: cups, index cards</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"/> Cliff Bible Memory Buddy poster*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> media player</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark 1 John 1:9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Nehemiah Returns to Jerusalem" Bible Story poster*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cliff Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Unit 1, Week 1) (1 per child)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Nehemiah 1:1-2, 4, 5-9, 11; 2:3-5)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> whiteboard and dry-erase marker</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> piece of paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More</i>: Bibles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game</i>: no supplies</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!



## Play Dough Pleas

**Supplies:** play dough, pencils

Imagine you're going to meet a king or queen. Sculpt or carve something you'd ask for.

**?** Tell about your sculpture. Why would you ask for that?

In our Bible story, we'll find out what a man named Nehemiah asked a king for. Nehemiah boldly asked *God* for help, too, knowing that **God forgives us** and hears our prayers.

## Cup-Bearers

**Supplies:** cups, index cards

Today we'll hear about a cup-bearer named Nehemiah. It was Nehemiah's job to taste and deliver drinks to the king. Let's practice our cup-bearing!

Balance a cup on an index card and carry it like a tray. Can you balance more than one cup? Then try balancing a cup on your head or elbow, too.

**?** What's a job you think sounds really hard?

You may have dropped a cup or two, and that's okay. Today we'll discover that we can always talk with God about our failures because **God forgives 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

Welcome, friends! Let's stand up and *light* up this place with a song. Here we go!



"This Little Light of Mine" music video

Wow! You all brighten my day just by being you. God made each of you in such a special way, and there's nothing you can do to change God's amazing love for you.

## Bible Point

Today we'll discover another amazing thing about God. **God forgives us.** It's true! No matter what we do, God's love won't stop.

**God forgives us** is our Bible Point. So every time you hear the words "**God forgives us,**" fling out your fingers like fireworks (demonstrate) and say, "That's amazing!" Let's try that together.

- Say, "**God forgives us.**"
- Fling out your fingers as you say, "That's amazing!"
- 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 "That's amazing!"

Let's thank God for his forgiveness and sing a prayer of thanks. Follow along with the video and you'll catch on soon.



"You Forgive Me" music video



## Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Music Video* DVD
  - "This Little Light of Mine" music video
  - "You Forgive Me" music video
  - "Forever Reign" music video
- *Buddy Video* DVD
  - Cliff Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)
- Cliff Bible Memory Buddy poster



That's amazing!

## Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

Cliff is our Bible Memory Buddy! Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster. **Cliff is a cute little marmot. Hmm...I wonder where marmots live. Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge! You'll hear two fun facts about marmots' homes. It's up to you to decide which is true—this fact or that!**

- ❓ **Do marmots live in holes in trees or holes in the ground?**
- Have everyone pose like a tree to vote for *this* (trees) or lie on the ground to vote for *that* (ground).
- Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
- Dramatically give the answer: **Marmots burrow into the ground! Let's see if Cliff will come out and tell us more.**
- Watch the Bible Memory Buddy video.



Cliff 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 is 1 John 1:9. Let's say the verse together. I'll say a line, and then you repeat it after me.**

**"But if we confess our sins to him, (fold hands together in prayer) he is faithful and just (hold one palm up and then the other) to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."**  
(wipe hands together)  
(1 John 1:9)

**It's true! God forgives us. (That's amazing!) God is so amazing and so forgiving. That's why God deserves our praise. Let's sing another song!**



"Forever Reign" 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**.

- Arrange 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 stacking fist bumps by bumping the tops and bottoms of each other's fists.
  - Have kids take turns saying their names and answering this question. Crew Guides go first.
- ❓ **What's something new you heard recently?** Share a few topics to get kids thinking, such as animal facts, updates from a favorite sports team, or something new about a friend.

## The Heart of the Matter

In our Bible story, a man named Nehemiah heard some bad news. That's not so fun.

- ❓ **When have you heard bad news?**

Turn to someone near you and tell about a time you heard bad news that made you sad. Maybe you found out a friend was moving away, a pet was hurt, or someone you love was sick. Bad news can be hard to talk about. So as your partner shares, be sure to listen with a loving heart to show you care. Share an example from your life, then give pairs a few minutes to talk.

**Bad news is so hard. We may not know what to do next. We may feel stuck and like we don't have any answers. Perhaps you've felt that way when trying to solve a hard math problem in school. Like this one:**

Write this equation on a whiteboard:  $-0.25x + 1.3 = -0.55x - 0.2$

**Whoa! Can any of you solve this math equation?** Pause for reactions.



## Supplies

- Bible
- "Nehemiah Returns to Jerusalem" Bible Story poster
- whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- piece of paper

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!

You go first! Kids might not have a quick answer to this question. Sharing your own story will give them an example and a little extra time to think.



# 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 7 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	<b>Back Home Again</b>	<b>Nehemiah Returns to Jerusalem</b> (Nehemiah 1–2:20) God forgives us...and hears our prayers.
Unit 1/Week 2		<b>God’s People Rebuild Jerusalem’s Wall</b> (Nehemiah 4:1-23; 6:1-15) God forgives us...and helps us know what to do next.
Unit 1/Week 3		<b>Ezra Reads God’s Law</b> (Ezra 6:14-22; 7:1-10; Nehemiah 8:1-12) God forgives us...and gives us joy.
Unit 1/Week 4		<b>Prophets Talk About a Coming King</b> (Zechariah 9:9-10; Isaiah 9:1-7) God forgives us...so we have hope.
Unit/Week	Unit Theme	Lesson Theme
Unit 2/Week 1	<b>Immanuel Is Here</b>	<b>John the Baptist Is Born</b> (Luke 1:1-25, 57-80) Tell everyone...Jesus is the greatest gift.
Unit 2/Week 2		<b>An Angel Visits Mary</b> (Luke 1:26-56) Praise God!...Jesus is the greatest gift.
Unit 2/Week 3		<b>Jesus Is Born</b> (Luke 2:1-20) Surprise!...Jesus is the greatest gift.
Unit 2/Week 4		<b>Magi Worship Jesus</b> (Matthew 2:1-12) Found him!...Jesus is the greatest gift.
Unit/Week	Unit Theme	Lesson Theme
Unit 3/Week 1	<b>Jesus’ Friends</b>	<b>Jesus Gathers Disciples</b> (John 1:35-51) We’re friends because...Jesus is our friend forever.
Unit 3/Week 2		<b>Jesus’ Friends Go With Him to the Garden</b> (Luke 22:31-65) Even when we fail...Jesus is our friend forever.
Unit 3/Week 3		<b>Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene</b> (John 20:1-18) Celebrate!...Jesus is our friend forever.
Unit 3/Week 4		<b>Jesus Makes a Beachside Breakfast for His Friends</b> (John 21:1-25) No matter what we do...Jesus is our friend forever.

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