

## A new children's group

How God blessed Attleborough Baptist Church with a children's group, having previously had no children in the congregation. Interview with minister Loriane Roberts.



**W**hen Loriane Roberts became the minister of Attleborough Baptist Church, Nuneaton, in 2016, there were no children in the congregation. She wondered if this was about to change. At the outset, she had a vision which she believed to be from God of people walking off the street and into the church. It was a vision she shared with her small congregation, and they began to pray regularly for this to become a reality.

There was a particular focus on children. Each year Loriane would organise a children's service. Some would come, mainly grandchildren from the existing congregation, but as they didn't live in the area no one stayed. She engaged with the local school and other leaders in the area, but 'nothing'.

Last year she began to organise a cinema afternoon, a free event with food to bless the community. The first week around 10 came, and Loriane was encouraged. The plan was to do

it fortnightly, but in subsequent weeks, no one turned up.

"Eventually I thought, 'well, it's not working', so I stopped it in July or August," she says. "It was clear it wasn't of God."

However, she kept faith that God would grow his church, and kept encouraging members that they would see the fruit of their labour - and change was around the corner. Come September, she organised the usual annual children's service, and saw around 20 children through the doors. Several months on, they're still here.

It's a mixed group, with several from a Christian background, but the rest unchurched. The church was blessed to have a couple of Sunday School teachers join the congregation around the same time ("another answer to prayer," notes Loriane) and now they run two groups each Sunday. The lowest number they've had is seven, but more often it's much more.

"I'm really encouraged," says Loriane. "For six years we've been praying and asking the Lord for children. We've been persistent, and for six years nothing.

"We've put leaflets in the area, but I think it's mostly because we have been consistent in prayer, speaking the word over the church, and trusting what God says will happen."

"And others are encouraged too. I've had people ring me up on Sunday and say, 'Loriane, I just can't believe we've now got children in the church!'"

"They love it. The impact is so great."

She says several months on, the group is thriving – and believes there's more to come.

"At Christmas, they did a beautiful presentation in our carol service. And you wouldn't have believed this was a Sunday School that only started in September. What they presented was just amazing. They are being taught core biblical material, and are full of questions about God."

"This is a vision of God's little army, an army that started from small beginnings. And this is just the beginning of what God will do. I sense in my spirit it's going to grow into a school, or a nursery."

"This is all God's work."

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