

## Pathfinders Report

Pathfinders is our group for school years 7-9 (ages 11-14), which meets during the 10:25 service. Our team of leaders has grown in number recently as we've had three new leaders join us since September, which has been a real blessing and they're all fantastic.

As with other Sunday groups, we're never quite sure how many young people we will have on any given Sunday, with numbers ranging between 3 and 10. This academic year, we followed the Daniel series and the Advent series that was done in the Sunday services. We did this as it can be helpful for the pathfinders and their parents to be looking at the same things so that they can talk about it at home. During the Hebrews series, we have done a series on New Testament letters, but it often worked out really well in terms of still looking at the same themes. For example, we looked at Galatians, focussing on chapter 1 verses 6-10, in Pathfinders when the passage in the service was Hebrews 10:1-18. We've had some excellent discussions in Pathfinders and I hope that parents have had good discussions with the children as a result. They're not afraid to ask questions, whether it's asking how to find books, chapters, and verses in the Bible, or asking very deep questions – both are equally important and help the group to learn from each other. This is made possible by the wonderful volunteers who give their time, energy, and gifts to invest in these young people.

Some of the dangers of children's groups during the service are that it can be seen as a replacement for discipleship in the home, and that it creates a church within a church, where the children belong to these groups but then don't feel a sense of belonging to the wider church. Christian parents should be the primary people making disciples of their children, and it is important that children have a sense of belonging to the wider church, not just their groups. The degree to which Pathfinders is effective is therefore impacted by parents having those conversations about what they've heard in the service and what the young people have discussed in their groups, and a way being found for young people to be included in the whole church. Please pray for our young people, for their discipleship, that they would find a place of belonging in churches throughout their lives, and that they would follow Jesus their whole lives.

*Jon Sadler*