

## All-Age Worship

Colchester Meeting holds "All-Age Worship" a few times a year, when there is a 5th Sunday in the month. This is an opportunity for adults and young people to spend time together, to share in a meeting for worship and to learn from one another. We see this as a chance for all ages to meet together, to appreciate one another's company, and to perhaps bring out the 'child' within us all.

Everyone gathers at the usual time, 10.30 on 5th Sunday morning, in the Meeting Room, where activities are set out for everyone to take part in, as and when they wish. After a few minutes of silence, a Friend will introduce him or herself and explain what is happening. A theme, chosen by the Children and Young People's Committee, is the basis for readings, stories and art and craft activities. Past themes include "Conflict and Peace", "Families", "Autumn" and "Circles", with activities as varied as planting bulbs and acorns, creating peaceful wish-trees, or making paper-plate pizzas of hope.

All-Age Worship can be described as a "semi-programmed" Quaker meeting, because some things have been planned in advance. There may be a reading from Quaker Faith and Practice, and a children's story may be read aloud. Everyone is invited to tell about something from their own experience that relates to the theme, or to share their thoughts about it, and to participate in the art and craft activities on offer. The atmosphere tends to be one of hushed and respectful stillness, which is nevertheless busy with a few children and adults drawing or making things.

Some Friends attending All-Age Worship find that they want to say something in Meeting for the first time. Unlike our usual silent meetings, it is fine to speak more than once if you want to. There might be some coming and going – it's fine if you have to see to the needs of your child or to go out of the room, and then you can just come back in when you're ready. We try to leave some time after anyone speaks to think about what has been said before anyone else speaks.

The meeting will end when the Friend who introduced the meeting shakes hands with another Friend.

*For anyone who would prefer a silent meeting for worship,  
this is available in the Parnell Room.*