This year in church our theme is “Stories of Our Lives.” We are exploring the stories we tell about who we are – as individuals, as families, as a church, as a city, as a country. We’re looking at how these stories tell who we are, and about how our choices can shape and write these stories. As Unitarian Universalists we believe that each and every person is important, each and every person has a story to tell, and we can learn from hearing each others’ stories.

This month, we begin by looking at the pictures and objects that tell the story of where we come from, our background and family history.

**Story Books from Children & Family Time:**

(September 13th) *This Is Me: A Story of Who We Are & Where We Came From* by Jamie Lee Curtis and Laura Cornell – What would you pack in your suitcase that represents YOU?

Watch the video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EP1Mdn-b22E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EP1Mdn-b22E)

(September 20th) *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox – What’s a memory? Remembering stories through multigenerational connections.

Watch the video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dY5tR9g9eQ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dY5tR9g9eQ0)

(September 27th) *Jackie and Jesse and Joni and Jae* by Chris Barash – How are mistakes part of the stories of our lives? What can we do to fix our mistakes?

Watch the video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvcuRdo_lag](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvcuRdo_lag)


**Join us for Children & Family Time** every Sunday at 10:15 on Zoom and for worship at 9:30 and 11:00 at [www.dallasuu.org/live](http://www.dallasuu.org/live).

**Activity for younger children:** Suitcase Coloring Page

The story *This Is Me: A Story of Who We Are & Where We Came From* asks the question, “If you were leaving where you were from and packing a suitcase full of things that represent YOU, what would you put in your suitcase?” What would you put in your suitcase to show that you are a Unitarian Universalist? Use [this coloring page](#) to draw what you would bring with you! Share it with your friends at church by sending a picture it to [childrensministries@dallasuu.org](mailto:childrensministries@dallasuu.org).

**Activity for older kids:** Storytelling with Artifacts
The book *How to Write Your Life Story* by Ralph Fletcher offers guidance on how to begin writing your life story. You don’t have to wait until you’re old and gray to start! In this book, it offers this suggestion for getting started:

Gather artifacts from your life – things that have been important to you – and place them in a box. Artifacts might include a beloved stuffed animal or doll, first baseball glove, scrap from baby blanket, photo of you as a flower girl/ring bearer at a wedding, Girl or Boy Scout badges, old journals, trading cards. Each of these objects is filled with memories. Hold the object, close your eyes, and see what rises into your memory. Where did you get it? Who gave it to you? Did it ever get lost? How did (does) it make you feel? When you start writing, having some physical artifacts on hand will help you begin your story.

**Activity for families to do together:** Tashlich (from PJLibrary, pjlibrary.org)

*Tashlich*, which literally translates to “casting off,” is a ceremony performed on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, which is on September 18th this year. During this ceremony, Jews symbolically cast off the wrongdoing and mistakes of the previous year by tossing pebbles or bread crumbs into flowing water. During this ritual, people think of things they’ve done wrong in the past year and then “throw them away,” promising for improvement in the coming year. In the book *Jackie and Jesse and Joni and Jae* by Chris Barash, the characters engage in this practice.

Kids can easily grasp the ideas of wanting to do better and saying "sorry." Introducing them to this practice helps them explore these ideas, and promotes understanding and respect of Jewish traditions. In addition to actually throwing bread crumbs in flowing water, here are some simple, age-appropriate *tashlich* practices for families to do together.

**Bath Crayons:** Use bath crayons to write or draw things you are sorry about in the tub and then wash them away. If your kids are too young to verbalize or recognize things that they are sorry for, you can do the writing or drawing for them and then let them do the part -- washing away the writing.

**Sidewalk Chalk:** Make a short list together and write it out in sidewalk chalk. Then, fill up some water balloons, or use the hose, to "erase" the words and sentences in the list. You’ll be left with beautiful, and temporary, rainbow streaks on your driveway or sidewalk.

*Stay tuned for more theme year resources in October!*