The History of You in Tree Rings

Trees have a special visual record of their growth, which is a series of concentric rings that go from the center of the trunk to the outer edge. Each dark ring represents a year of growth for the tree. If a ring is wide it represents a good growth year for the tree and if the ring is thin, it may be because the tree did not have enough water. Studying the age and history of trees using tree rings is called *dendrochronology.*

Want to be like a tree? You can represent your own growth and history by personalizing a series of concentric rings, just like a tree.

first year of growth

last year of growth
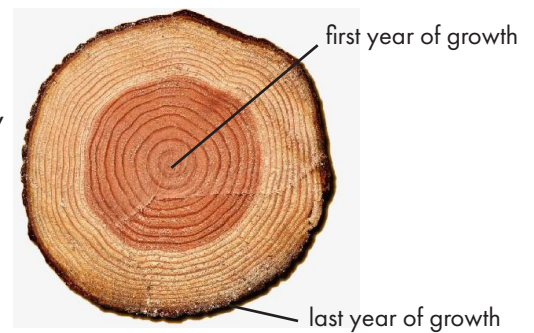
What you need:

- paper
- a pencil or pen
- colored pencils, crayons, or markers

What you do:

1. On your own or with your adult, write out a list of memorable events that happened to you, or that you participated in. Write how old you were when each event happened. For example, your list might include when you lost your first tooth, moved to a new town, grew an inch, or met your best friend.

2. Draw a small circle in the middle of your paper for the year you were born, then draw bigger and bigger circles until you have as many rings as your age in years. (The outermost ring represents your current age.)

3. Draw "bark" around your rings to represent your skin, or your body's exterior. Personalize your "bark" however you'd like!

4. Make a mark or image by the ring/year to note each of your memorable events. You can make each mark big or small, in a different color or shape, or even add a little note.

Things to think about:

- Did you have a year when many special things happened?
- How did you decide to mark your special event? Was it important to have the mark be related to the memory or event?
- Were you surprised by some of the things you remembered and put in your list?