

# Traditional Stories from the Cherokee Nation



## Why the Red Bird is Red

PART 1 OF 3

Many years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Redbird were plain and brown. Mr. Redbird was such a hard worker that he didn't give much thought to what he was wearing. He was busy being helpful, neat, and clean.

First thing in the morning, he went to get food for his family. He hunted for nuts, berries, and worms, which he took back to the nest. He fed his family before he thought about himself.

One morning daddy redbird fed his family, then he went to find his breakfast when he heard a moaning from behind a big rock. He flew over to see Mr. Wolf lying on the ground in pain.

The redbird said, "Friend Wolf, what happened?"

The wolf told him that the raccoon had said some insulting words to him so the wolf chased the raccoon up the tree above the river. When the wolf saw the reflection of the raccoon in the river, he thought it really was the raccoon and jumped in the river and nearly drowned. He crawled up on the bank to sleep, because he was exhausted. While wolf was sleeping, raccoon sneaked over and plastered his eyes with mud.

PART 2 NEXT WEEK...

Arkansas Education Standards: Oral & Visual Communications: Speaking, Listening & Media Literacy; Writing.4-7; Reading.8-11



### Reporter's Notebook:

- What character traits does the redbird have that others admire? What character traits do you have that others admire?
- Find examples of kind, nice, and hard-working in the newspaper.



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PART 2 OF 3



“Be calm,” consoled the bird, “Be calm, I can help you.” The pitiful wolf was bruised and sore and could not see. He was hurting so much he just cried and cried, although he did feel better knowing that some one was there. “This will be uncomfortable,” said the redbird as he fanned the wolf with his wings and tail. “I must peck this mud from your eyes. Hold very still while I stand on your nose. Now don’t move till I tell you.” He hopped up on wolf’s head and pecked carefully around the wolf’s eyes. “Now shake your head gently,” he said. “Now, open your eyes. What can you see?” The wolf shook his aching head and said, “There’s still a little mud and sand in my eyes.”

Redbird said, “Shake real hard and see what you can see.” The wolf said, “My eyes are hurting.” So the redbird lead the big wolf step by step in a way that the other animals would never have understand. When they got to the water the redbird said, “Dip your head in the cool water.” When the wolf went under the water and got the sand and mud of his eyes, he felt so good that he wanted to pay the bird for all his kindness.

“No, said the bird,” your appreciation is enough. I need to get home to my wife and babies.”

“I know something I can do for you,” said the wolf,” but I’m afraid you will be hurt at what I say.”

“Go ahead,” said the bird, for he saw that this was going to take more and more time from his work. “Well,” said the wolf, “All the animals know that you are kind, nice, and hard-working, but your coat is just plain ugly. I can make you a new, colorful coat if you will let me.”

The redbird was surprised at this because he always was neat and clean and beyond that he never thought about how his clothes looked. He said to wolf, “If it will make you feel better, you may make me a new coat and I will remember you for it.”

PART 2 NEXT WEEK...

Arkansas Education Standards: Oral & Visual Communications: Speaking, Listening & Media Literacy; Writing:4-7; Reading:8-11



### Reporter's Notebook:

When you help others, you show compassion. Find a story in the newspaper about someone who showed compassion for another person. Retell the story in your own words.

Define compassion:

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PART 3 OF 3

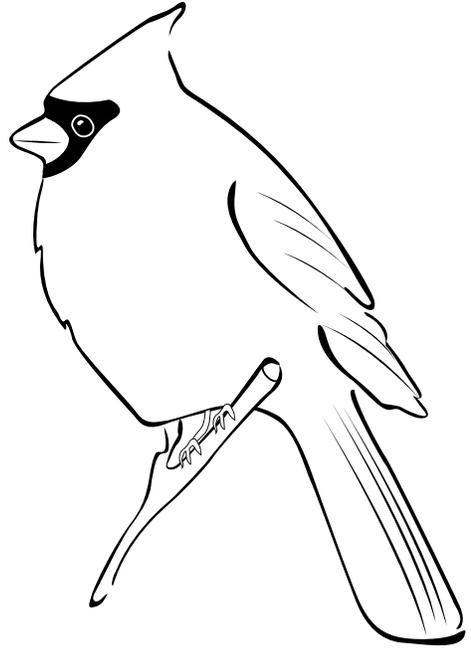
So the wolf went toward the river on the other side of the rock and found a broken paint rock. A paint rock is found in the mountains after volcanic eruptions. When you break it open, you find red clay and oil which will paint your face like the Cherokees would do to get ready for a ballgame. A boy once found this rock, used some of it, and left it for the next one when they needed it.

The wolf painted the redbird a bright red color and the bird flew back to his family. When his wife saw him, she was excited, she wanted to see him from all sides.

He felt silly, but he showed her his suit. He said, "I know you love red, and I know you want a red dress because everyone (even boys who have girlfriends and mothers) wants a red dress.

The mother bird knew that if she left the children, little Bubba would fall out of the nest and the little girl bird might choke on something. She didn't want to be gone long and she didn't want to tell her husband that she didn't want to leave the children with him for long. So she rushed to the paint rock and got a little bit of red for her coat and rushed back to her babies. And sure enough, Bubba had fallen out of the nest and little baby girl did not feel well .

So when you see mother bird, you'll know she has only a little red on her coat because of her concern for her babies and the father has a fully red coat as a reward for his kindness from the wolf. **The End**



**Color the redbird.  
Graph the number of redbirds that  
you see in your yard for 1 week!**

Arkansas Education Standards: Art.2-3; Reading.8-11; Math.1 & 15; Life Sciences.2.4



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