

# How people got fire

## (Native American story)

### ••••• : Props suggested

- Pictures of the animals involved:
- fireflies, fox, geese, hawk.

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*Note: This story can be acted out with face masks.*

Native Americans looked at the world around them. They saw the stars, the animals and the plants and created stories about all of them. They did not write the stories down at first, but told them to the children. As the children got older they remembered the stories and told them to their children. The stories are usually set long before people arrived on the earth. This one is about the dangers of fire and how people got it.

A long time ago, when all the animals lived happily together, all the fire in the world stayed in one place with the fireflies.

Fox wanted to learn to fly like his friend Goose. Goose thought for a while about this and eventually said the geese would help him, but he must not open his eyes when they were flying. Fox agreed and they put some wings on him.

Fox was greedy and selfish. Although the geese had helped him fly and he enjoyed the feeling of moving through the air he was still not happy with this extra gift. He wanted more.

On one occasion when Fox and Goose were flying together it suddenly got warm as they flew over the walled village of the fireflies. Forgetting what Goose had said, Fox opened his eyes to see what it was. Immediately, his wings disappeared and he fell to the ground with a large thud.

Two fireflies came to see how Fox was. He asked how he could escape from the village as there was a large wall all the way round to stop the fire getting out.

The fireflies said that a tree would bend down and lift him out; all he had to do was ask. The nice fireflies asked him to stay for a while to look around the village.

In the centre of the village was a large fire. Fox saw how warm it was and wanted some for himself. He carefully snapped off a small branch and tied it to his tail. As he spoke to the fireflies he placed the branch in the fire. Slowly it caught light. As soon as Fox saw this he started running for the tree to get him out. 'Help me out!' he shouted to the tree. With the fireflies chasing Fox, the tree bent down and took him out of the village. Everywhere Fox ran, the branch kept touching plants, which caught fire. He threw it off his tail and gave it to Hawk. As Hawk carried it away sparks fell to earth and spread the fire.

Fox ran down his hole and hid from the other animals, knowing that he had damaged the earth.

### Follow-up questions

- ◆ Why do you think Fox did this?
- ◆ How do you think the fireflies felt?