

# INTRODUCTION

Because these stories were originally transmitted orally, we feel strongly that the introduction to them should be presented in an oral fashion. Therefore, we recommend that before students read the first story, each teacher either memorize the story and recite it to the class or try retelling it, coming as close to the original story as possible.

This experience is invaluable in becoming sensitive to the intricacies of the oral tradition which we hope teachers will share with their students. Many activities required of the students involve developing their abilities to tell stories (see Firetalk activity card) and each teacher, having gone through a similar experience, will better be able to help students.

We also encourage teachers to invite local story tellers into the classroom as often as possible.

With other stories it would be helpful to periodically repeat this type of story introduction or perhaps draft students to try it. Another option for later stories is to read the story several times and then tape record it to play for the class.

## **Using the Four Winds Activity Card**

Before beginning the first story explain to students that they will be reading stories written and illustrated by Indian people. They will be encouraged to participate in activities which will help them become more familiar with Indian culture, past and present. After reading each story there will be a variety of things to discuss and do. Some activities will help students practice language arts skills, while others will help them better understand Indian people.

Most of the activities work best if the class is divided into smaller groups. The Four Winds student activity card is designed to help organize the

classroom into smaller groups and can be used repeatedly. The card also clarifies the significance of the four directions in some Indian cultures, as well as the importance of the number four in general. (There are four directions, four seasons, four stages in a life, four cardinal colors [black, white, red, yellow], four races of people [Caucasian, Negroid, Asian, Indian] and four basic worlds [mineral, plant, animal, human]). This can be discussed and students should be encouraged to look for the reoccurrence of the number four throughout the stories. There are other significant numbers in Indian culture such as the number seven used by the Sioux. These numbers should also be identified and discussed if possible.

The Four Winds card can also serve as an introduction to the use of the activity cards in general. Read through the card with your class before dividing into groups. Be sure that everyone understands the tasks required of each group. This card may become the cornerstone to developing a positive attitude toward group work.