

Sunflower

Now the story of the sunflower. The story or legend comes from long ago when Mother Earth was formed...when all things were good. Our white brothers have a story of this too. The people were happy, but then something happened. The people walked away from the good ways of life. The Maker of All Things was very sad. He tried to bring back the people into harmony with nature again. But like people of today, they had the same ways...they did not listen to Him. So, the Creator said, "I'll have to teach them a lesson." He darkened the Sky and the Sun with dark clouds, and it rained and covered the earth and all things. Only a few mountain tops were not covered. Only a few people and animals were left. The dark clouds covered the Sun. It could not reach the land. It was sad, as the Sun loved the earth and all things in it. The Sun knew that the Creator had a reason for doing this. He does things at the right time. It's not always easy for us to understand. He has lots of helpers. Indians call them Good Spirits. Others call them angels. The Sun and all the bodies in the Sky are his helpers too.

One was called Spirit Light. Sun and Spirit Light were very good friends. When they had problems, they discussed them with each other and helped each other. So, at this time of long ago, the Sun called his friend, Spirit Light. Sun said, "I am so sad for all things that are wet and almost dead. I will be needed when the clouds are gone, and the rain has stopped. How can I dry up the land and still have strength for people, animals, and plants to make them strong to live again?" Spirit Light said, "I could go down to bring light and warmth to help you." No," said the Sun, "when you go down you cannot come back again."

Finally, the time came, and all the clouds and rain went away. When the Maker of All Things saw all the things gone on Earth, he was sad. He went to the Sun and said, "Sun, can you not help the plants grow faster so the people and the animals and the birds can come back soon?" The Sun said, "I have worked hard to dry the earth. I hardly have any strength left now and am so tired, but I'll do my best."

Now Spirit Light came and spoke softly to the Creator. "Let me go down to the earth. My light and warmth can't reach from here. But down there I can help." Creator said, "You are so good, and you want to help, but once you go down there you cannot return." "I know," Spirit Light said. "All right," said the Maker of All Things, "we will change you into a beautiful plant. As a plant, you will bring warmth and light into the day. You will give food for people, the birds, and animals, but you cannot return. But you will grow tall so you can be nearer your friend, the Sun.

So, he blessed her and planted her in Mother Earth. She grew and had strong stems and big leaves shaped like a heart. Her flowers looked like the Sun. Her strong roots sucked the moisture from the Earth. She gave light and warmth too. Then the Creator put a rainbow in the sky to tell the people and the animals and the birds that there was new hope. The seeds and roots give food to people, birds, and animals. It is called Sunflower.

Look carefully at the plant. She is happy, and so will you be. Her face is tuned to the Sun all day long until the Sun goes to sleep. In the morning, you will find a few tears on her face. Tell her how much you thank her and love her so she will not long for that world above too much, as she misses her friend, the Sun. Her name is Sunflower. We gather her seeds and roots for food. She helps us in our sickness. We will feel happy just by looking at her.

Sunflower Recipes

For food.... The roots can be cut into pieces and dried. When all the moisture is gone, grind them into a coarse meal. This meal can be mixed with wild berries, wild onions, garlic, nuts and other meals or flours and enough water to form a patty. Heat and brown in oil on both sides. The roasted seeds can also be eaten as is, or they can be put in a salad or ground into a meal and combined with the ground roots and other ingredients to make patties as above.