

# READ Guide: *The Curious Cardinal*

## Why do we READ?

READ is a way to have meaningful conversations with a child, using a book to promote thinking, increase comprehension, build vocabulary and enhance relationships.



### Repeat the read

When we repeat books with children, we give them the opportunity to hear vocabulary words several times. As we encourage children to become storytellers, we give them the chance to use language related to the story. By reading this book at least three times, you help children build language and vocabulary, engage in meaningful conversation and nurture critical thinking. You help create powerful, determined learners and problem-solvers.

**1<sup>st</sup> read:** Focus on events: what's happening in the story

**2<sup>nd</sup> read:** Focus on emotions connected to the story events: How do the characters feel?

**3<sup>rd</sup> read:** Ask "why" questions as the child tells you the story.



### Engage & Enjoy

When we keep our children engaged in a book, they are more likely to learn the vocabulary we are trying to teach and to participate in conversations about the book. Using silly voices and making sounds and movements helps keep children engaged in the story. Make the most of every opportunity to build vocabulary and model what skilled readers do when they read.

Enjoy acting out and explaining **vocabulary** from *The Curious Cardinal* to your child. **Change your voice** to show emotion. Use **gestures, actions and sounds**, and have the children join you. **Point to** words/illustrations and share **child-friendly definitions**.

**Bustling:** moving around quickly

**Forest:** a large area covered with trees and other plants

**Nest:** a place made by birds for laying eggs and keeping their young

**Canopy:** something that covers an area

**Hatchling:** a young animal that has recently come out from its egg

**Curious:** want to learn or know something

**Explore:** to search for something

**View:** to look at

**Autumn:** the third season of the year when crops and fruits are gathered and leaves fall

**Clearing:** an open space in a forest

**Winter:** coldest season of the year

**Familiar:** something seen many times before

**Spring:** the season after winter and before summer when plants begin to show

**Unusual:** different from others



### Ask Questions

Having conversations about the book is critical. Encourage thinking and talking by asking open-ended questions that begin with "how" or "why" to prompt children to talk through key events and think about characters' thoughts and feelings related to those events. Children who cannot yet talk can still listen to you- ask and answer your own questions. Use think-alouds to help children understand important parts of the story by saying things like, "I wonder why..." or "She must feel..."



### Do more

Make the book come alive. Tie the book to other parts of the day, and provide opportunities for the children to connect with the events of the book.

Call attention to the animals, seasonal changes, and sounds they hear. Challenge your child to explore the environment around them the next time you are in the woods or forest. Remind them that the cardinal in the story was curious about the animals, trees, changes in time, and sounds in the forest.

# READ to make a difference for a lifetime.



**The first time you read, use think-alouds to teach vocabulary, key events, and the story problem. Use voices, expressions, tone and pace to bring the story to life.**

Look at the cover, read the title and author and say, "I notice this red cardinal just hatched from its egg. I bet he is curious about the world around him. As seasons change, I wonder what this curious cardinal will discover with his new friends when he leaves the nest... Let's read and find out."

As you read, explain any words your child may not understand like *curious*, *explore*, and *canopy*. Act out words like *splashing* and *soaring*. Point to illustrations as you say the words to help support vocabulary. After the first read, ask, "During each season, what did CC discover at each place in the forest with his friends?"



**Call out emotions Ask open-ended questions: "how" or "why" to encourage children to discuss key events, characters and emotions.**

Before reading, say, "Now that you know this story so well, help me read it." Remember CC had so much fun playing with his new friends and discovering all the new places in the forest during the autumn, spring, and summer seasons. But something changed during the winter months and CC found himself alone. "Let's read and find out how CC felt when the season changed to winter, and he was all alone without his friends."

Say things like:

- "I noticed that the season changed to winter and it's snowy and cold outside." And
- "I am thinking all of the animals like the warbler migrated to a warmer climate for the winter." And
- "I am thinking CC feels lonely because all of his friends have gone away and he has no one to play with."

Use this read to talk about what happens outside during each season. After finishing the read, ask "How did CC feel during the quiet winter season?"

Other questions might be: "I wonder, what is going to happen when it gets warmer, and seasons change again?" (His friends will come back to the forest.) "What happened to all of his friends in the forest?" (They migrated to stay warm and search for food.)



**Child tells story The third time you read, encourage children to tell you about the key events and how they relate to the character's thoughts and feelings. As you read, promote new vocabulary words and ask questions like "What's happening here?"**

For this read, before you start, say, "Remember CC was curious to discover the forest with his new friends. As the seasons changed CC noticed his friends would leave and come back. Why did his friends leave the forest during the winter season?"

Then, instead of reading every word, encourage your child to tell you what is happening on each page and how the characters feel about what is happening. Use vocabulary from the book and previous reads to restate what your child says (for instance, if your child says, "All of CC's friends left the forest in the winter because it's cold outside," say, "Yes, I think the other animals migrated to a warmer place so they can look for food." After the read, ask "Why did the other animals leave the forest during the winter season?"

**Mark Valdez** is a writer and director who lives in Minneapolis, where he runs a theater called Mixed Blood. His projects for young people include adapting and directing Gary Soto's book, *Chato's Kitchen*, for Childsplay. Mark has done many projects with the Alliance Theatre, like directing the animated short film *Sit-In*, written by Pearl Cleage. He also wrote and directed the animated short film, *The Curious Cardinal*, on which this book is based.

**Nicole Kang** is a Korean-American artist seeking to uplift and amplify underrepresented individuals and communities. Nicole draws inspiration from her experiences as a second-generation Asian woman living in the South. Nicole weaves her memories, heritage and traditional Korean motifs into her work. She is invested in the themes of motherhood, love, and loss. She graduated from Oglethorpe University with a Bachelor's degree in Visual Arts and currently works to advocate for Georgia AAPI communities.

The Tony Award-winning **Alliance Theatre** produces original work for all ages, from shows bound for Broadway to shows made for babies. Since its inception in 1968, the Alliance has been committed to expanding hearts and minds on stage and off. For the past 20 years, the Alliance has focused its efforts on increasing language acquisition and literacy in the youngest members of our community. This book is the latest in those efforts. The Alliance Education Department annually reaches over 100,000 students through performances, classes, camps, and professional learning for educators. [alliancetheatre.org](http://alliancetheatre.org)

**The Mayor's Summer Reading Club** is a program for children age birth to five and their families that takes place in locations in Georgia cities and towns throughout the summer. The program designates a city-wide book choice for children birth to two and another book for children ages 2-5 to share with families at no cost. Throughout the summer, libraries, museums, farmers' markets, and other institutions in town will hold book club reads to model research-based methods of reading books with children and parents and will host enrichment events based upon the stories. The books will come to life as children enjoy arts and crafts activities, drama exercises, and other hands-on activities designed to make the language in the stories meaningful to children.

The reading club utilizes public-private partnerships to:

- Continue building vocabulary and reading skills in children birth to five over the summer
- Coach parents on how to better engage with their kids around reading
- Improve reading and literacy rates among children in Georgia