



Young Children

Upstairs—Downstairs

Best Use

As a family night activity with younger children

Value

Helps children understand that God did for us what we could not do for ourselves

Advance Preparation

- Schedule an evening to take the family out for ice cream or some other favorite dessert
- Bring a Bible with you to the dessert place
- Follow the instructions on the reverse side for a great family night experience
- **Note:** If you live in a one story home you will need to change locations for this activity to a place with a staircase

STEP ONE: Build Anticipation—Tell the children that you want to take them out for ice cream or another favorite treat. Ask each “Are you willing to accept a challenge to earn the right to go?”

STEP TWO: Pose the Challenge—Go to the top of your staircase and explain the following to the children waiting below:

- **Share the Goal:** “I want you to pretend that I am God in heaven. I want you up here with me very much. Let’s figure out how to make that happen.”
- **Explain the Rules:** “You need to do your best to get up here to where I am. But no part of you (including your clothes) can touch the stairs or the railing. You have five minutes to figure it out. Now go!”
- **Wait & Watch:** Silently wait as the children try to think through a solution. They will likely try to “cheat” in one way or another. Clarify that there is only **one** acceptable solution.
- **Give Hints:** As time runs down, mom or dad should give hints so at least one child figures out the solution: **“God” can come down the stairs and carry you up the stairs on his back!**

STEP THREE: Discuss the meaning—Once each child has been carried upstairs load everyone into the car and head for dessert. While eating, explain that Jesus Christ is God who came down from heaven to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

STEP FOUR: Discuss and Pray—Read Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8-9 together aloud and explain that we all sin and that no one can do enough good to get to heaven. But God wants us with Him so much that He came down to earth, like I came downstairs to get you, to do for us what we can’t do for ourselves! End your time together having each child say a brief prayer of thanks to God for the free gift of salvation.

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