Act It Out: Angels Going Up and Down

At a Glance:
Students will make simple angel crowns and act out the story of Jacob's dream with angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth. One child will play Jacob, one will play the Lord, and all the others will be angels. The roles can be rotated and the play repeated as many times as wished.



Supplies Needed for an Angel Crown for Each Child (Choose one):

- paper – strips of paper long enough to be taped or stapled together around a child's head and crayons or markers to decorate the crowns (*optional:* stickers, glitter, etc.)
- tinsel – to be taped into a crown
- fabric – strip of felt or other fabric
- ribbon – colorful ribbons long enough to tie around a child's head

Supplies for the Play:

- If you have access to a staircase, use it to enact the play. If not, lay out a masking tape "ladder" on the floor or outdoors. Make the ladder long enough for your group to all stand on it at one time, in two rows, one going up and one coming down.
- pillow to represent the stone Jacob slept on
- *optional:* a cloak for Jacob—any shawl or piece of fabric; a special sash or robe for the "Lord" to wear.
- *optional:* music to play in the background during the dream

Teacher Preparation:

- Depending on which type of crown you choose and the size of your group, you may wish to arrange for someone to help you during the crown-making activity.
- If you are using a masking tape ladder, lay it out ahead of time.

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Act It Out: Angels Going Up and Down cont.

Directions:

1. Explain that the children will be acting out the story of Jacob's dream. First they will be making angel crowns to wear.
2. (Note: If you are making paper crowns, the children need to decorate the strips before they are taped into a circle to fit their heads.) Help each child tape, tie or staple the crown into a circle which fits around the top of his or her head.
3. If using a masking tape ladder, tell the children which end is the top and which is the bottom. Have them practice all standing on the ladder or staircase and walking up and down in a circle.
4. Choose one child to be Jacob and another to represent the Lord. *Optional:* Put on costumes. Have all the other children put on their angel crowns.
5. Position the angels on the ladder or staircase. Put the pillow representing the stone at the bottom of the ladder.
6. Read the story, pausing while the children act it out at your prompting.
7. If time allows, repeat the play with different children in the roles of Jacob and the Lord.

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Angels Going Up and Down Script

Read the play, pausing for actions where indicated.

Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. *(Jacob walks across the stage.)*

So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. *(Jacob picks up the stone—remember that it would be heavy—and places it beneath the ladder or at the bottom of the stairs. He lies down with his head on the stone and pretends to sleep.)*

Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. *(The angels all begin walking up and down the ladder or stairs in a continuous circle.)*

And behold, the Lord stood above it… *(The Lord enters and stands at the top of the ladder or stairs.)*

…and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. *(The Lord raises both arms up; the angels keep walking.)*

Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. *(The Lord gestures with one arm and then the other to indicate a wide expanse of land.)*

Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." *(The Lord holds one hand out toward Jacob.)*

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it…. How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" *(Jacob wakes up. He looks up at the ladder and raises his hands. Then he folds his hands and bows his head.)*

Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel…. *(Jacob takes the stone and sets it up and pretends to pour oil on it.)*

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." *(Jacob puts his hand over his heart, making a promise to God.)*

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