The Johnson family have been touring the western part of the United States and have just arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Here we are at last. In a few minutes we'll see the famous "Spiral Staircase".

I've heard of it.

There's quite a story about the old staircase. But let's go in and let the sisters tell us about it.

A few minutes later...

Good afternoon, sister. Is there someone who could show us the famous winding staircase?

I'll be glad to show it to you. Come with me.
It's beautiful, sister!

What a remarkable piece of work.

The story of the staircase begins back in 1873 when this chapel was being built. The Superior, Sister Magdalen, had started a school for girls here in Santa Fe, in 1852.

"Mother Magdalen hired masons, carpenters, and architects to build the chapel."
"Before very long the church was completed... but a problem arose..."

SISTER: Someone's made a dreadful mistake!

YES: There isn't enough space to build a stairway to the choir loft.

HOW ARE THE SISTERS GOING TO GET UP AND DOWN?

THE WORKMEN ARE RIGHT. THEY COULD NEVER FINISH A STAIRCASE IN THAT SPACE.

Well, they started, anyway. They tell me that after they put the two large bolts in the choir loft, at the beginning of the staircase, they found it would be impossible.

"The sisters used a ladder."

I'm sure that if we pray hard enough, St. Joseph will find the answer. He hasn't failed the sisters of Loretto yet.

"One day, while Sister Magdalen was talking to some of her pupils..."

WELL, CHILDREN, today is the last day of our novena to St. Joseph. I hope he has heard our prayers.

I'M SURE HE HAS, SISTER! I wonder who that old man is, sister.

I HEAR THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A CARPENTER, SISTER. PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOU.

"The old man approached Sister Magdalen, and..."

"Sister Magdalen told him that indeed he could."
"THE OLD MAN WENT DIRECTLY TO WORK."

"FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, THE OLD MAN WORKED ON THE STAIRCASE. HE SAID VERY LITTLE AND NO ONE SEEMED TO SEE HIM OTHER THAN AT WORK IN THE CHAPEL."

"ONE DAY, SISTER MAGDALEN ENTERED THE CHAPEL TO FIND THE STAIRWAY FINISHED..."

"OH, IT'S BEAUTIFUL! BUT WHERE IS THE CARPENTER? HE HASN'T BEEN PAID."

"NO MATTER WHERE THE SISTER LOOKED, THE OLD CARPENTER COULD NOT BE FOUND. HE SEEMED TO HAVE DISAPPEARED."

"MANY ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS HAVE COME TO SEE THE STAIRCASE. THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY IT DIDN'T COLLAPSE YEARS AGO OR WHY THE WOOD HASN'T WORN, DESPITE ITS DAILY USE."

"IT'S CERTAINLY MYSTERIOUS. A SPIRAL STAIR MUST WRAP AROUND A STRONG POLE FOR SUPPORT. OTHERWISE THE STAIRS WILL COLLAPSE UNDER THEIR OWN WEIGHT. YET THERE IS NO SUCH POLE HERE."

"THAT IS AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY. PERHAPS ST. JOSEPH HIMSELF WAS THE CARPENTER, OR PERHAPS HE SENT A SKILLED CARPENTER TO DO THE WORK FOR HIM. BUT WE DO KNOW THIS MUCH—THE STAIRCASE WAS NOT FINISHED UNTIL THE SISTERS PRAYED TO ST. JOSEPH, SO IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER THE STAIRS SEEM TO BE HIS WORK."

"WHO WAS THE CARPENTER SISTER?"