

Using the Strength of Your Shoulders | Joshua 4

By the "shoulder," in the Word is signified all power. *Arcana Coelestia* 4937

After Israel crossed the Jordan River and entered the land of Canaan, one man from each tribe was to lift a stone from the riverbed, carry it to the bank to set up a memorial pillar which would be used to tell children about the great miracle the Lord had done. The fact that men were to *shoulder* the stones shows how heavy they must have been. Shoulders are especially helpful for lifting heavy things because they can bear weight. Experiment with lifting various weights. Discover how your shoulders help you lift.

Materials Needed

items of varying weights that are safe to lift, e.g. bags of flour, sugar, food cans, or (light to moderate weight) athletic weights

plastic wrap

tape

Directions

1. If you will be lifting bags of food, protect the bags against splitting and spilling if dropped by encasing them securely in plastic wrap. Tape the edges to secure if needed.
2. Place the objects to be lifted on the floor.
3. Invite students to choose an object to lift.
4. While lifting, try to be aware of which muscles you are using. Is your hand, arm, or shoulder lifting the weight?
5. Try “shouldering” a weight. Does shouldering a weight change how heavy something feels? Is it easier to lift a weight on top of your shoulder, or with your hand? Does a shoulder make a difference to lifting a light weight, or only to lifting a heavy weight?
6. Discuss the importance of good posture. It is easy to hurt your back, neck, or arm if you lift without proper preparation.
7. When else might you rely on the strength of your shoulder? Imagine throwing a ball. Does an overhand or an underhand throw use your shoulder more? Which type of throw is more powerful? What about paddling a canoe? Or doing a pull-up or push-up?
8. The big stones that the men from each tribe lifted correspond to true ideas from the Word. How do we lift up powerful ideas in our lives? How might “shouldering” these ideas give them even greater power?