Using the Strength of Your Shoulders

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

One man from each tribe was to lift a stone from the riverbed, to carry it to the bank, and to set up a memorial pillar, which would be used to tell the story of the great miracle the Lord had done. The men were to *shoulder* the stones, showing how heavy they must have been. Shoulders bear all weight we lift. When something is heavy, the shoulder can be especially helpful for lifting. Experiment with lifting various weights. Discover how your shoulders can 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 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 holding the weight?

5. Try "shouldering" a weight. Does shouldering a weight change how heavy it feels? Is it easier to lift a weight on top of your shoulder, rather than with your hand? Does a shoulder make a difference to lifting a light weight, or only to a heavy weight?

6. Discuss the importance of good posture when lifting. It can be easy to hurt a back, neck, or arm if you lift heavy weight improperly, without preparation.

7. When else might you rely on the strength of your shoulder? Imagine throwing a ball. Which uses your shoulder more—an overhand or an underhand throw? Which kind of throw is more powerful? What about paddling a canoe? Or doing a pull-up or push-up?

8. The big stones lifted by the men from each tribe 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 in our lives?