

Lift the Weight

9. Measure Up

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: K-12

Group size: 4 or more

Time: 10 minutes

Introduction: Rules and laws are a measuring stick by which we gauge our actions. They give us a standard to live by and keep order in society. This activity will show that without rules to regulate our actions, we would be left with confusion.

Materials:

- 1 yardstick, tape measure, or ruler per team
- 1 piece of paper per team
- 1 pen or pencil per team

Activity:

For this activity, students will be measuring a select number of distances that you have determined and measured ahead of time. Make each distance at least 15 feet or more; far enough that they will have a hard time figuring out the exact length. For example, have a team measure “from the door to the window.” Have a different distance for each team to measure.

Divide students into teams or partners. Give each team a piece of paper, a writing utensil, and an assigned distance to measure. First, have the teams guess the distance without measuring and write it down. Next, have them measure the distance using only their bodies (feet, hands, body height, etc.). Once again, have them record their guesses on their papers.

Finally, give each team a measuring device and have them actually measure the distance. Have them write down the actual distance and compare this with their guesses from steps one and two.

Processing the Experience:

- How did you make your first estimate? How accurate were you?
- How did you make your second estimate? How accurate were you?
- How easy was it to figure out the distance using the measuring device? Why?
- A measuring device is a standard by which we measure distance. How is that like laws which measure behavior?
- Why would we need a standard by which to measure behavior?
- What would happen if people ignored the laws? What would happen if everyone were able to make up his or her own laws to live by?