

Explore Volume: Who's Got the Biggest Fist?

Challenge your child to see who in the family has the "biggest" fist. "Big" is relative, but in math terms it refers to what has the most volume, from which you can discover the mass of the object. This is a fun way to introduce kids to the concept of volume, and give them a quick hands-on activity to boot.

What You Need:

- Container large enough for most hands
- Erasable marker or masking tape

What to Do:

1. Find a container big enough for most hands. Fill it about halfway with water. Make a mark to show the water level.
2. Have your child make a fist and put it in the water. Mark the water level on the container.
3. Take the fist out. The amount of water that was between the marks equals the space that your child's hand took up.
4. Who has a bigger fist? Who has the smallest one? To find out, have each person put his or her fist in the water. Mark the water level each time. The person who makes the water level rise the most has the biggest fist.



Did You Know? When Archimedes, the ancient Greek mathematician, hopped in the bathtub, he noticed that the water rose a certain amount, and realized that he had just discovered the way to measure volume. The story goes that he was so excited, he ran down the street naked shouting, "Eureka!" (that's Greek for "I've found it!") Though your child may not be quite so enthused, it's a great introduction to this important mathematical concept.

Reprinted with permission from "Math Detectives: Finding Fun in Numbers", the book that introduces geometry, probability, ratios, and more! Get your child on the case by becoming a "math detective" with this fun and engaging book. By Lalie Harcourt and Ricki Wortzman (Sterling Publishing, 2003)

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