

## Interactive lesson



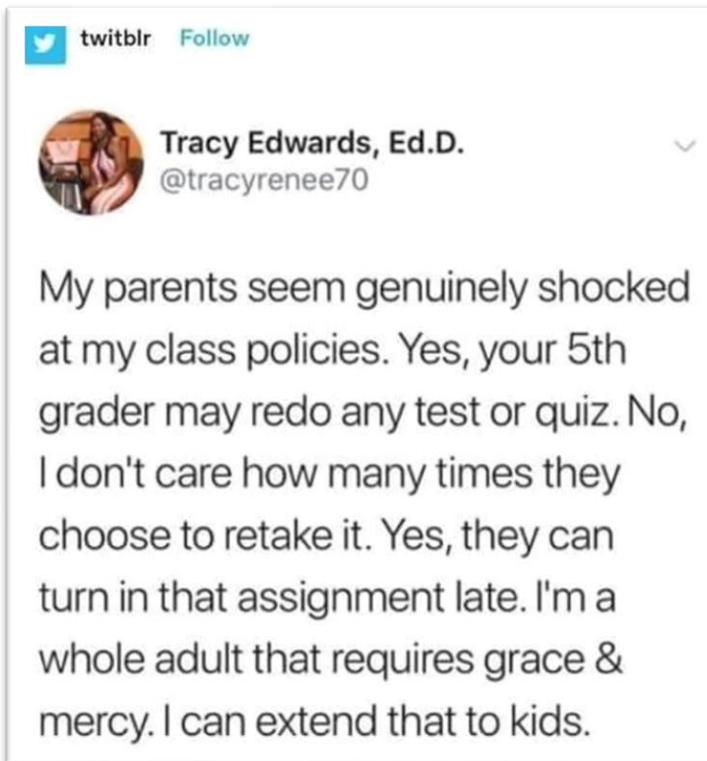
picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-checking-test-papers-6684372/>

When is the last time you were graded on something?

<Let them respond>

Were you allowed to redo the work for a better grade?

Why/not? <Let them respond>



I saw this posted recently on Facebook.

Do those class policies shock you?

<Let them respond>

How do you think God evaluates us on living as Christians?

<Let them respond>

How do we evaluate one another on living as Christians?

<Let them respond>

Should we evaluate one another? <Let them respond>

What about faith accountability? <Let them respond>

Jesus extended radical grace to all whom He encountered, helping them to live better with one another and more faithfully to God. Let us remember that when presented with others; share the grace and

mercy of the Holy Spirit for all to learn to live better with one another and more faithfully to God.

## Gospel lesson

Listen for the radical grace Jesus gives to the lowest members of society:



picture from

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-ten-leprosy/>

## Luke 17:11-19

<sup>11</sup> On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee.

<sup>12</sup> As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance,

<sup>13</sup> they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

<sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean.

<sup>15</sup> Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice.

<sup>16</sup> He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?"

<sup>18</sup> Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

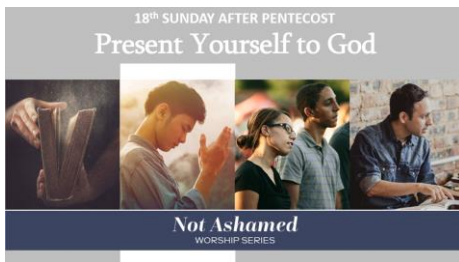
<sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "Make Me a Servant">

TFWS #2176>

## Message: Present Yourself to God



Foreground picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/not-ashamed/seventeenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/seventeenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Blessed Redeemer who refocuses us on good,  
as we take time now to further consider today's  
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may be pleasing to God when presented in Your  
name. Amen.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/not-ashamed/eighteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/eighteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

We continue this month's "Not Ashamed" series with "Present Yourself to God":

"Let our prayers look inward and outward at the same time. We pray for our own growth, our own healing, our own transformation.

At the same time, we pray for a hurting and hungry world and for the will to reach beyond our walls in service and love.

Let our songs sing of the Christ of faith, who sustains us with a powerful presence but also of the Jesus who ate with sinners and healed the sick, the one who went out approved by God."

Whenever I have to go somewhere public, I get ready for it by thinking about what to wear, how to do my hair, and whether I need to put on makeup. When I get put together, I go to my husband and ask him, "Am I presentable?", twirling around so that he can warn me of any mishaps I may have missed. He usually tells me, "I would present you," and gives me a kiss before I head off.

I want to be presentable for those I will encounter. I would not be going to see them if I did not think

some sort of relationship with them mattered. I do not want to alienate them or to be dismissed as ridiculous or inadequate. The more important the reason for seeing them, the more carefully I prepare: I try harder when getting ready for church than I do for going shopping.

How much harder should we try, then, to prepare for our encounters with God? And what really matters in God's eyes, that we need to have presentable? I am pretty sure it is not our clothes or makeup.



*picture from MMMS collection*

The psalmist tells people to sing praises to God, to let all the earth hear of God's glory. So one way to prepare is through our testimony to others of what God does in our lives. To whom have you praised God lately? To anyone not in church?

Jeremiah tells the people in exile from the Promised Land to build houses, to marry, and to have children in Babylon, because their fortunes are bound up in the fortunes of the communities where they are.

So another way to prepare for encounters with God is to live constructively wherever you are, helping both your household and the community you are in to prosper. To do this, we need to let go of grudges and preconceived notions of how things should be, and to

focus on what can be better in what is before us.

What opportunities in the community have been missed because we refused to work with someone? How can we move forward more positively to build better?



picture from

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumoten-Leprosy/>

Jesus did not turn away even the most shunned members of society. The ten outcasts in desperation presented themselves before Jesus. How many of us wait until we are desperate before we present ourselves to God, begging for help? God does not ignore us sinners even when we approach God in this way.

Working within the framework of what society deemed acceptable, Jesus sent the lepers according to the law to see the priests. All ten of them were blessed with physical healing, but only one remembered the source of that blessing enough to proclaim it immediately to the world. Only one presented himself in praise and thanksgiving before Jesus after having been blessed. So only that foreigner was told that his faith had made him well.

You would think that those raised in faith would be able to recognize the work of God more readily, to celebrate God's blessings more quickly and loudly

than those who were not. Yet it was a Samaritan, one who was rejected by the Jews, who did. Thus another way to prepare for encounters with God is to accept that others may have different ways of doing what is right in God's eyes than we do.

In today's world, we expect those raised in the church to be more faithful; many are. But we must not forget that God blesses all of us, and some whom we think wild may have deeper love for God than those who have sat in the pews every week.



*picture from*

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-sitting-on-gray-metal-chair-1755743/>; credit: Leandro Lima

- † That person with tattoos and piercings is probably into drugs and other illegal activities – or do they just enjoy creative displays on their body, proclaiming the glory of God through body art?
- † I'm liberal, that person is conservative, clearly they are misguided sinners putting their own ego first – or are they showing love for God in their own way, according to life as they know it?
- † I'm straight, that gay person is corrupting the sanctity of marriage – or are they showing love for others in their own way, as God works with changing society?

Paul instructed Timothy to warn people: avoid

wrangling over words. We can get caught up in legalese, but God calls us to love. It is not about which of us is right or wrong, but about building relationships. We are not called to judge, or to make choices for other people, only to proclaim Jesus. Yet another way to prepare for encounters with God is to help others (within their own situations) to grow in faith and to develop along whatever productive path they choose.

Everyone goes through trials of their own or others' making, displaced from blessings we had before. The Holy Spirit walks with us through our trials, blessing us in new ways in the new places we come to. Given that God is ever faithful to us even when we stray, that God loves us so deeply, what should we do to be more presentable for God?



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/not-ashamed/eighteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/eighteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Rather than arguing over legalities- which only serves to hurt people - we need to focus instead on God's love and relationships. That way, rather than winding up sick and alienated, people can be healed and reconciled for a healthier community.

So stay focused on God's ways. Wherever you are, give thanks for the blessings you have and look to build upon those blessings. Reach out to help others see



that they can be blessed too; help them to heal physically, emotionally, and spiritually. In this way we prepare to present ourselves to God as faithful servants striving to build God's kingdom on earth.

Let us now recite together the United Methodist social creed:

**OUR SOCIAL CREED** (2016 UMC Book of Discipline)

We believe in God, Creator of the world;

and in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of creation.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

through whom we acknowledge God's gifts,

and we repent of our sin

in misusing these gifts to idolatrous ends.

We affirm the natural world as God's handiwork

and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by humankind.

We joyfully receive for ourselves and others

the blessings of community, sexuality, marriage, and the family.

We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women,

children, youth, young adults,

the aging, and people with disabilities;

to improvement of the quality of life;

and to the rights and dignity of all persons.

We believe in the right and duty of persons

to work for the glory of God

and the good of themselves and others

and in the protection of their welfare in so doing;

in the rights to property as a trust from God,  
collective bargaining, and responsible consumption;  
and in the elimination of economic and social  
distress.

We dedicate ourselves to peace throughout the world,  
to the rule of justice and law among nations,  
and to individual freedom for all people of the  
world.

We believe in the present and final triumph  
of God's Word in human affairs  
and gladly accept our commission  
to manifest the life of the gospel in the world.  
Amen.

### <Doxology>

### <Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

God of love and compassion, the need for your  
presence in this world is often overwhelming.

Confrontation and division are everywhere we look:  
in communities, in our countries, in our church, and  
in our world.

We have endured much, and others have had to endure  
so much more.

The apostle Paul reminds us that if we endure, we  
will reign with Jesus.

May the gifts we give help all your children endure  
in these strange and challenging times.

(above prayer from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>)

- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and comfort:
  - **Barbara Mardock** - heart attacks recovery, pacemaker
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
  - -
- Thanks for
  - -
  - -
  - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
  - Family far off
  - Travelers
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
  - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
  - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders - local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.
- Lord, please help people who yet struggle with war

in their homeland.

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray,  
<Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "Here I Am, Lord" UMH #593>

<Benediction>



background picture from  
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/not-ashamed/eighteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/eighteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

**Be not ashamed to tell the Lord, "Here I Am."**

**Present yourself to God**

in gratitude for the grace you have received,  
ready to serve in response.

Whoever you encounter and wherever you go,

hold the people in your heart

and work for renewal of all lives in faith and love.

And may the grace of God,

the love of Jesus Christ,

and the presence of the Holy Spirit

be with you and among you in the days ahead.

Amen.