

Interactive lesson



picture from picture from
<https://www.unyumc.org/ministries/conam;>
 credit: Paige McNatt

November is Native American Heritage month. What do you think this picture depicts? <Let them respond>

The artist, Paige McNatt, described it this way:

“The school is in the background with the children’s moccasins and shorn braids being buried with the truth in the foreground. I wanted to have dark, looming clouds in the sky behind the school to convey the darkness and pain that it represents.



paige mcnatt
<https://www.unyumc.org/ministries/conam/>
 - Paige McNatt
 “The school is in the background with the children’s moccasins and shorn braids being buried with the truth in the foreground. I wanted to have dark, looming clouds in the sky behind the school to convey the darkness and pain that it represents. I chose to have “justice for our children” behind a yellow, more hopeful part of the sky. On the grass, there are brown spots to show that there are many other holes just like the one in the foreground of the drawing.”

I chose to have "justice for our children" behind a yellow, more hopeful part of the sky.

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Do you think this should matter to us? Why/why not? <Let them respond>

Some Indian boarding schools were established by Methodists, including [The Shawnee Methodist Indian Manual Labor School](#) in Fairway, Kansas, and [Asbury Manual Labor School](#) in Fort Mitchell, Alabama.

Do you know why they were founded? <Let them respond>

The theory of the schools, as articulated by Capt. Richard H. Pratt (who founded the first Indian

boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania), was “Kill the Indian, and Save the Man.” How do you think Jesus would have responded to that? <Let them respond>

The schools operated from early/mid-1800s through the 1960s. There are survivors today who remember it.

“This unresolved historical trauma associated with the cultural genocide and years of stripping Native Americans of their culture, land and language through the church and government-sanctioned boarding schools with the motto ‘Kill the Indian, Save the Man’ has wreaked havoc on Native American families,” said NAIC in a [news release](#).

Today we are celebrating All Saints Day and All Souls Day. Do you think we can honor the Native Americans who died in the name of Christian mission? If so, how best? <Let them respond>

Let us not forget the souls who lived on this land before us, give God thanks for the undeserved mercy and love shown to us, and honor their memories by striving for reconciliation both with [those who were harmed that we ultimately benefitted] and with [those for whose benefit we have been harmed].

Gospel lesson

Jesus was teaching in the temple during Holy Week, and various scribes and chief priests had posed challenging questions to Him – all of which He fielded and turned on them, to their surprise. Then

another elite temple group tested Him, possibly thinking that since He had just embarrassed their rivals, He would support their position over them.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-taxes-caesar/>

Luke 20:27-38

²⁷ Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him

²⁸ and asked him a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.

²⁹ Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless;

³⁰ then the second

³¹ and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless.

³² Finally the woman also died.

³³ In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her."

³⁴ Jesus said to them, "Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage;

³⁵ but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.

³⁶ Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.

³⁷ And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

³⁸ Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" UMH #103>

Message: Band of Puzzlers



Foreground picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/face-to-face-with-jesus/twenty-first-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/twenty-first-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Holy Lord of all souls past and present,
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 seek to engage and reconcile with Your
wisdom and in Your love. Amen.

We continue our “Face to Face with Jesus” series this
week with “Band of Puzzlers.”

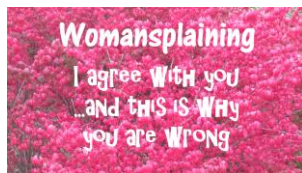


picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/face-to-face-with-jesus/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

“The gospel writers love these stories—stories where Jesus gets the better of those who seek to outsmart him appear in all the gospels. But a key to the stories is that Jesus always engages.”

When my sisters were visiting, we all piled into our van to go to Syracuse for the gender reveal party. On the way back, my sister began giving a detailed explanation of something we already knew. I told her, “If you were a guy, I would say you were ‘mansplaining’. Is there such a thing as ‘womansplaining’? What would that be like?”

My husband Keven immediately quipped, “I agree with you, and this is why you are wrong.”



picture from MMMS collection

I think Jesus used that kind of explaining a lot when

asked difficult questions. He acknowledged the law used as the basis for the question, then told those posing the questions how they were mistaken or misinterpreting it.

People have long had misinterpretations and skewed perspectives. It is natural to prioritize our own interests over those of others, but if we do so to the extent that it hurts those others, it becomes sinful. The psalmist mentions the wicked; he was not talking about those who worked on **his** behalf.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/rebuilding-temple-2/>

Haggai dealt with people returning from exile [who put building up their own situations so far above helping with the temple] that the faith community was in danger of falling apart. They needed that temple to keep them oriented on being people of God. We need our church community to keep us focused on God despite the demands and distractions of our world.

In the days of the early church even as now, there were hustlers trying to take advantage of whatever was going on to get more for themselves. Fearmongers claimed the end of the world was at hand, driving people to either self-indulge or to focus on short-term, ultimately destructive behaviors. Paul and company had to remind them that God is truly in

control and has longer-term plans for us. We need to have faith and trust in God's timing.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-taxes-caesar/>

The Sadducees of Jesus's day had their own agenda, too. They were an elite sect who maintained the temple and did not believe in life after death. They came to Jesus with a trick question to reinforce their assertions, to prove their righteousness and merit for more honor than other temple leaders.

Jesus accepted the plausibility of the widow marrying the brothers in succession; it was as the law of Moses prescribed. However, the Sadducees were mistaken in trying to apply literally the law of Moses beyond the life they were living at the time.

Because no one could come up with a plausible answer for how it worked, the Sadducees used it as evidence there was no resurrection, no life after this one, for God's law - like God - must be eternal. But the point of the Mosaic law was never to get the letter of the law right, to apply it literally in perpetuity no matter what the circumstances; it was to enable healthy relationships with God and healthy, nurturing relationships within the community of God's people.

The greatest commandments, of loving God and loving one another, do apply eternally: no matter what the circumstances, no matter what the society or culture, and no matter what life you are currently living.

Furthermore, the Sadducees' assertion that there was no life beyond this one fell apart when Jesus quoted the scriptures the Sadducees clung to most tightly.

How often do we think we have things figured out, promote our way of thinking as what must be, only to learn that something different is true? We spoke earlier about how some Methodists hurt Native Americans in pushing their own way at the expense of the Native American culture - and we are still prone to doing things like that today.

How often are we taken in by people who, like the Sadducees, are so sure of themselves yet unwilling to be challenged because it threatens their position? Or worse yet, by scheming people trying to use situations for their own ends with no regard for what is right?



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/face-to-face-with-jesus/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Puzzlers will come, seeking their own ends even at the expense of our faith. We need to be wary of duplicitousness and distractions; seek Jesus for

answers. We know that God is the common link, the center of everything for us and for others.

Someone called, asking me for money to help with rent. When I asked to meet her and invited her to make use of the food pantry and Sunshine shop, she was unavailable. I am not mailing any check.

If we just open our eyes, our ears, our hearts - and listen - God will guide us truly, overcoming doubts and upending ridiculers and naysayers. We know the Holy Spirit is working by the fruits we see: things that build everyone up as individuals and as a community, rather than dismissing their unique gifts or insisting on destroying their culture.

So how do we open ourselves to God's wisdom? Focus on living with God every day, through prayer, bible reading, daily meditation, and weekly through worship and small faith accountability groups. Use those Wesleyan pillars (scripture, tradition, reason, and experience) to discern what is right for our faith journey now.

Then, get out into the community and talk with folks. Keep an open mind for the wisdom they have learned, but not so open that your brains fall out - keep checking what they say against God's call for living in restorative love. Be gentle in explaining why you think differently, validating them as people and the

experiences **they** have had as well as yourself and your own experiences.

Seek to grow together in faith and love of God. The saints who went before us all sought to build the kingdom of God on earth; now it is our turn. Perhaps we can even find a community-building project and drive it with faith expression that draws others to learn more about our beloved Jesus too.

<Doxology>

<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

God of truth and light, we come to you from our daily lives that are full of scams and tricks seeking to gain our confidence and steal and betray.

In many ways, it makes us wary of opportunities to show compassion.

Jesus has reminded us to trust in you and in your truth that speaks not through phones or emails but directly to our hearts.

As we give this morning as you have called us, may we do so with joy, not fear.

We pray this in the name of Christ, who intercedes for us that we might know truth.

(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:

➤ **Matt Sheldon** - illness, at St Joe's

➤ -

➤ -

➤ -

➤ -

➤ -

➤ -

➤ -

• Thanks for

➤ -

➤ -

• Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.

➤ Family far off

➤ Travelers

• Lord, please help all people who struggle, especially those to whom we remain oblivious.

• 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.

All these things we pray in Your holy name, Amen.

<Communion - UNCOVER elements>

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

God of Abraham and Sarah, God of Miriam and Moses,
God of Joshua and Deborah, God of Ruth and David,
God of the priests and the prophets,
God of Mary and Joseph,
God of the apostles and the martyrs,
God of our mothers and our fathers,
God of our children to all generations.

<slide change>

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and
resurrection you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made
with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

<hold hands out over bread/elements>

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he
took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

<hold hands out over juice/elements>

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks
to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the
new covenant, poured out for you and for many for
the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you
drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in
Jesus Christ,

<slide change>

we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.
Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

<hold hands out over elements>

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on
on these gifts of bread and juice.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

Renew our communion with all your saints, especially
those for whom we light candles today.

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of
witnesses, strengthen us to run with perseverance
the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus,
the Pioneer and Perfector of our faith.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each
other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at
his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit
in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours,
almighty God, now and forever.

Amen.

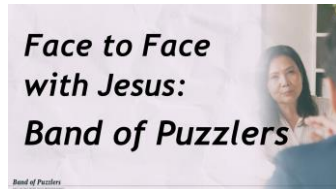
And now, with the confidence of the children of God,
let us pray: *<Lord's Prayer>*

<Breaking of the bread and lifting of the cup>

*Explain about candlelighting for ALL Saints/Souls
<Serving of the elements/music background>*

<Hymn “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing” UMH #664>

<Benediction>



background picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/face-to-face-with-jesus/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/twenty-second-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

When you come face to face with puzzlers, remember how the Lord engaged them.

Seek to be face to face with Jesus and ask for God’s wisdom.

Bring the message of hope and love, of justice and peace, to all you meet.

Let others see the love of God, the face of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit within you.

Amen.