



1. Open with prayer (and introductions depending on class size)
2. Describe Black History School (BHS) as the *winter version of Vacation Bible School (VBS)* with a new twist – paralleling Black History (our story) with salvation history (God’s glory)
3. Review the BHS Overview
4. Tell BHS scholars why we’re studying the book of Daniel:
 - a. Parallels between Daniel’s story and ours beyond exile & enslavement. Black Excellence is neither new nor the exception.¹ We also come from nobility. As quiet as it is kept, Egypt – the acknowledged cradle of civilization – is in Africa.² The earliest city there dates back to 3,100 BCE. ³ There’s much more to our story than slavery!⁴
 - b. It offers us encouragement in today’s tumultuous times by showing God’s Sovereignty. No matter which kingdom captured Judah, or which king was on the throne, God remained in control. So many people are concerned about the possibility of the 45th president becoming the 47th president. No matter who is in the White House, God is in control.
 - c. It equips us with tools to live holy lives in hostile places. America is not as friendly to Christians today as it was four decades ago. It used to be that the outliers in society were the un-churched. Today, church goers are increasingly in the minority and ridiculed. The book of Daniel illustrates the transformational impact our witness can have on the world. Because Daniel and his companions remained faithful to God in word and deed, pagan kings became worshipers of the true and living God. People in our spheres of influence will become curious about Christ when they see us living by faith and when they hear us sharing our personal testimonies.
5. Announce the lesson title & aim; read the focal text; describe Daniel 1 as the prologue
 - a. Helps us read the book properly – introduces main characters & themes
 - b. In chapters 1 – 6, we see four displaced teenagers learning how to navigate a new world
6. Use the map of the Babylonian Empire to show students where Judah was (in Palestine then – though Jerusalem today is the capital of Israel-Palestine), Judah’s proximity to Egypt, the location of the decisive battle of Carchemish, where Babylon overthrew Egypt’s occupation of Jerusalem, and the trek from Judah to Babylon. Review key dates and events while doing so.
7. Use the text box next to the map to point out how much time passes between the verses
8. Focus on verse 2a, “The Lord gave King Jehoiakim of Judah into his power.”
 - a. God’s sovereignty over geopolitical affairs
 - b. The Babylonian captivity was prophesied as a consequence of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God (Jeremiah 25:1-9)
 - c. The Bible declares that God reigns over all nations (Psalm 47:8-9)

¹ Black Excellence <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C061dE5rfPL?igsh=MTB6b2hocXZnazR5bA==>

² <https://www.britannica.com/place/Egypt>

³ <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-egypt/ancient-egypt> & <https://www.memphis.edu/egypt/resources/timeline.php>

⁴ The Fruit of Black History <https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cx2ljNpMb3h?igsh=MTBhMHV6bno4YnR6OQ==>

9. Read the remainder of verse 2 and discuss Nebuchadnezzar carrying away sacred vessels from the temple that Solomon built from "the house of God"
 - a. When Pharaoh Shishak invaded Jerusalem during King Rehoboam's reign, he raided the temple and carried away gold shields. Rehoboam replaced them with shields of bronze, (1 Kings 14:25-27)
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar carelessly carried away sacred (holy) vessels and defiled them by placing them in the house of his idol, little "g" gods (cf 2 Timothy 2:20)
10. Read verses 3 & 4 and discuss the deportation of Jerusalem's best and brightest
 - a. This was something new. Prior to this deportation, conquering nations either displaced the inhabitants from the land or subjected them to bondage within the land. Either way this was colonization.
 - the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area
 - the action of appropriating a place or domain for one's own use
 - b. In the New Testament, Judea was colonized by Rome. Roman soldiers occupied the land to "keep the peace." During much of the transatlantic slave trade, enslaved Africans were deported from West African countries that had been colonized by European countries.
 - c. Nebuchadnezzar opted to assimilate Jerusalem's best brightest. His plan was to immerse them in the "literature and language" of Babylon (indoctrination) so they would blend into the culture (assimilation) rather than stand out from it.
11. Read verses 5-7 and discuss renaming as a form of assimilation
 - the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society
 - a. Names in the Bible signify origin, purpose, character, or circumstance. They often honor God.
 - b. Stripping the Hebrew boys of their names that honored God and giving them names associated with Babylonian gods (Bel/Baal, the national god; Aku, the moon god; Nebo, the god of wisdom) was an attempt to disconnect them from their culture and identity.

HEBREW NAME	MEANING	NEW NAME	MEANING
Daniel (dinîyē'l)	God is my judge	Belteshazzar	Baal will protect
Hananiah (hănanyâ)	God has favored	Shadrach	Command of Aku/Great scribe
Mishael (mîšā'ēl)	Who is what God is	Meshach	Who is what Aku is /Most like god
Azariah ('ăzaryâ)	Jehovah has helped	Abednego	Servant of Nebo

12. Discuss the history of more recent times outlined on page 2
 - Familiarize yourself with the content in footnotes 1 - 4 on page 1 of this document and 1 -3 on the student edition.
 - The references on page 1 are repeated in future lessons so you can choose how much to share each time

Next week, we'll continue with the prologue and see these four young men, who are gifted by God, navigating their new world without compromising their characters.