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- (1) Open with *prayer*
 - (2) Remind folks that Black History School (BHS) as the *winter version of Vacation Bible School (VBS)* with a new twist – centering our story and its parallels to the biblical text & *review the BHS Overview*
 - (3) Remind BHS scholars that we're studying the book of Daniel because:
 - a. There are parallels between Daniel's story and ours **before exile & beyond enslavement.** There's much more to our story than slavery and trauma.
 - b. 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 unchurched. Today, church goers are increasingly in the minority and ridiculed. The book of Daniel illustrates the **transformative impact our witness can have on the world.** Daniel and his companions remained faithful to God in word and deed, and God rewarded their faithfulness.
 - (4) Remind folks that Daniel 1 is the *prologue*
 - a. It helps us read the book properly & introduces the main characters & themes
 - b. In chapters 1 – 6, we see four displaced teenagers learning how to navigate a new world
 - (5) Walk through the Lesson 1 *review*
 - a. Begin by talking about the bronze shields that King Rehoboam put in the temple after Pharaoh Shishak invaded Jerusalem and raided the temple, carrying off the gold shields that King Solomon, Rehoboam's father, placed there
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar's raid was not the first. The people of God are resilient! There's nothing we can't do with God on our side!!!
 - (6) Announce the *lesson title & aim*; read the focal text
 - (7) Read the verses in the *recap box* on the left and walk students through the outline on the left that recaps the themes from Lesson 1
 - a. After reading Dan 1:3 & 2 Kings 24:14, state that deportation is forced displacement from one's homeland NOT an opportunity for work study.¹ With textbooks in Texas and Florida stating that enslaved Africans were "unpaid interns," it is important to emphasize that both the exiles in the biblical narrative and our African ancestors were taken against their will.
 - b. After reading Dan 1:4, mention that enslaved Africans were most "valuable" at ages 18-30 with certain physical characteristics. Those who survived the Middle Passage were able to adapt to life in the Americas because they had an aptitude to learn. Though literacy was most likely around 10%, mother-wit or common sense was high. Today, we dominate everything we're given a chance to do. Black Excellence is neither new nor the exception.²
 - c. After reading Dan 1:5, point out that the 4 teenagers in the book of Daniel being schooled in Babylonian literature and language were similar to W.E.B. DuBois' 1903 "*Talented Tenth*"

¹Texas <https://empathyeducates.org/texas-board-of-education-revises-textbooks-slaves-were-unpaid-interns/>

Florida <https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2023/07/21/florida-history-lesson-slavery-an-unpaid-internship-editorial/>

² Black Excellence <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C061dE5rfPL/?igsh=MTB6b2hocXZnazR5bA==>

concept that referred to the one in ten Black men who were able to become leaders of the Black community because they had acquired a college education.

- d. After reading Dan 1:6 & 7, remind folks of the *significance of names* in the Bible and in the 1977 mini-series *Roots*³
- Names *in the Bible* signify origin, purpose, character, or circumstance. They often honor God. 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.
 - In *Roots*, Kunta Kinte wanted to keep his heritage and identity intact so badly that he had to be beaten to agree to change his name to Toby. Fiddler, played by Louis Gossett, Jr., says, "Lord God, help that boy. They goin whoop him dead."

(8) This week's theme, *Daring to Be Different*, is highlighted in Dan 1:8-16

- a. In verse 8, Daniel's refusal to "*defile himself*" shows us how we should live as Christians in our so-called "post-Christian" society, (Rom 12:1 & 2).
- b. In verse 13, we see that Daniel *eats what God says we should eat* in the beginning, (Genesis 1:29).
- c. Verse 16 begs the question for us: ***What do we need to give up to be found better?***
- d. Being different – standing out instead of blending in – is what gave these boys an advantage.

(9) Their God-given *gifts* and talents *opened doors* for them, (Dan 1:17-20 cf Proverbs 18:16).

- a. Dan 1:17 shows us that God gave each of them different gifts, (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). Only Daniel could interpret dreams.
- b. Dan 1:18-20 - Yet, they were all granted access to the king, stationed in the king's court, and found to be 10 times better than everyone else in the king's service.
- c. As divine originals, we are as different as snowflakes. Yet, we can all be great.

(10) We are descendants of royalty! The map of Cush & Sheba illustrates the fact that African stories of nobility and giftedness pre- & post-date Daniel's in the Bible

- a. As mentioned last week, the Kushite Empire dates as far back as 1070 BCE. In Genesis 10:6 & 7, the descendants of Cush inhabited much of the western coast of Arabia as well as the land immediately south of Egypt in Africa.
- b. The nation of Sheba was close by. Gold, frankincense & myrrh were traded from there. It's quite possible that the magi from the east in Jesus' birth narrative came from Sheba. We know that Queen of Sheba visited Solomon (1 Kings 10). Solomon built the temple that was raided by Pharaoh Shishak during Rehoboam's reign and Nebuchadnezzar during Jehoiakim's reign.

(11) In 1964, playwright Lorraine Hansberry coined the phrase "young, gifted & black" while addressing a group of teenagers about the power of Blackness.⁴

- a. Nina Simone was inspired to write a song with that title that has been remade by Aretha Franklin as well as Common and Lala Hathaway.⁵
- b. You may want to play a version of the song and/or discuss the lyrics and the importance of affirming our young people's giftedness.

(12) Our young people's future is bright! Just as God sustained Daniel through multiple transitions of power from Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar to Darius to Cyrus; God will sustain us.

³ https://youtu.be/FMPFQo5V-IA?si=WFONY_97_QI1SHkH

⁴ Lorraine Vivian Hansberry was an American playwright and writer. She was the first African American female author to have a play performed on Broadway. Her best-known work, the play *A Raisin in the Sun*, highlights the lives of African Americans in Chicago living under racial segregation. Wikipedia

⁵ Nina Simone's inspiration https://youtu.be/_hdVFIANBTK?si=mGlvALxjI6F_2Swa Aretha Franklin's remake https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=8ab2abe41028ca3d&sxsrf=ACQVn08ww91sowkIvvT92vJvi8wsi0Zc3Q:1707522209296&q=aretha+franklin+young+gifted+and+black&tbm=vid&source=lms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewi-tez1t5-EAxWqmIkEHezaBVgQOpQJegQIDBAB&biw=1536&bih=738&dpr=1.25#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:1cbf9c75,vid:qFidqj9rIo,st:0
Common & Lala's remake <https://youtu.be/pPfgiNjLZ9I?si=sEUUp2jXQYIFtyHkc>