



# Renaming and Reclaiming a Faith Practice

Debbie Streicher

**I**n Scripture, God renamed Abram and reclaimed Abraham with an envisioned purpose to be the father of all nations. Jacob was renamed and reclaimed Israel, father of the twelve tribes of Israel. When God renamed and reclaimed, He had an intended purpose. In our ministries when we reflect on some of our existing resources and programs, is it possible by simply renaming them and reclaiming them as vital faith formation tools that we can bring new life, en”theo”asm, and visioning to them?

## The FAITH<sub>5</sub>

Originally designed as the FINK<sub>5</sub>—a 5-step outline to be modeled every time small groups met in the congregation and used as a faith formation tool in the home, Faith Inkubators renamed the process the FAITH<sub>5</sub> in 2008. This provided the innovative edge needed to bring the focus back to what was really important. Renaming this faith practice, highlighting it in all the resources, and being intentional about facilitating the 5 step process has proven to be an instrumental move. It revealed this core piece to be an essential and effective faith formation tool for all ages.

Why FAITH<sub>5</sub>? Because the acronym, Faith Acts In The Home, gives meaning and value to the process.

- **Faith.** It’s all about providing tools for the formation of faith.
- **Acts.** The name of the book in the Bible that connects the Gospels to the rest of the New Testament. In the early church, they met in homes, dedicated themselves to the Apostles’

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teaching and prayer, and shared everything. Those “house churches” changed the world once before. It is possible they could do it again. In addition, when used as a noun, the word acts is defined as something someone has done or the action of carrying something out. The focus for this faith practice is to take intentional action in every household and set an expectation that it is done.

- **In The Home.** A reflection on Deuteronomy 6:6: *“Keep these words which I command you today in your hearts. Recite them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise...”*

The **FAITH5** steps are: *Share, Read, Talk, Pray, and Bless.* The **FAITH5** connects church to home, faith to life, and parents to children in a powerful way.

1. **Share** highs and lows of the day.
2. **Read** a verse from the Bible.
3. **Talk** about how the Bible verse relates to highs and lows.
4. **Pray** for one another’s highs and lows, for your family, and for the world.
5. **Bless** one another by tracing the sign of the cross on one another’s forehead or palm as a reminder that we belong to God and to one another.

**(Video Presentation:** Rich Melheim introduces the origin, philosophy and potential impact of the Faith5 at [www.faithink.com/inkubators/f5.asp](http://www.faithink.com/inkubators/f5.asp).)

Following this simple outline establishes both a tradition and a ritual for passing on the faith in the congregation and the home. David Anderson of Vibrant Faith Ministries has identified four keys for practicing faith. They are **Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Ritual and Traditions.** The **FAITH5** fall under the umbrella of these four

keys and provides one out of several other resources for congregations to use as a tool for all ages. The importance of providing a framework for passing on the faith is essential for faith formation. It sets a ritual in place and builds a tradition for years to come.

When Rich Melheim, founder of Faith Inkubators, asked Tony Campolo, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Eastern University in PA, what the healthiest thing a young person could say is, Campolo answered, *“We always do it this way in our home.”* We means one is not alone. *Always* means there’s a ritual and *this way* means a tradition. *Our home* says there’s a place to go to call home.

When the **FAITH5** is intentionally done in all small group settings in the congregation and in homes as well, faith stories abound. Faith stories lead to individuals and families growing together in their faith journeys. The end result is healthy faith formation with the natural outcome of a willingness to serve.

## Intentional Practice

**FAITH5** initiated a new look and introduced a vital way for all ages to be immersed in a faith formation environment. In my own congregation in Northern Virginia, we had been using Faith Inkubators resources for 5 years before I, in my role of Director of Education and Youth on staff, had a reality check. Our education team had a great idea for the opening of our Sunday school year in September 2000. We invited all ages to join us for a celebration of faith practices. A placemat was designed with faith practices for everyone to color and then laminate. Each household received a candle and was invited to take their placemat and candle home. Households were asked to do the **FAITH5** every day. We patted ourselves on the back for such a great idea and assumed we had now engaged the entire congregation in faith practices.

A couple of weeks later, I received a phone call from a mainline denominational magazine. Someone heard that we had introduced a tool for faith talk to happen in

homes. They wanted to interview some of the families and write an article about our congregation. I began to call families to ask if they would agree to being interviewed. Close to 65 placemats and candles were taken home on opening Sunday. The more calls I made, the more discouraged I became. Answers ranged from, "What were we supposed to do with the candle?" to "I think it's somewhere around here."

I found two families who were actually doing the faith practices every night. One family said yes to the interview.

Reality hit when I realized what we thought was a wonderful idea and even attracted attention from a national magazine wasn't really happening.

I called the magazine, apologized, and explained we had one family who would do an interview. They said, "Great! Let's do the story." I was amazed when they came and visited the family and ran the story. I was quietly wondering if this may be an indication of just how challenged we are in our congregations and couldn't believe the story was published.

In January of 2001, the article appeared. The family highlighted was uplifted and became advocates for doing faith at home. Other families looked to them for stories and our ministry began to grow one family at a time.

I learned an important lesson that year. Providing tools and resources for people doesn't mean they'll ever use them. As a congregation, we became more intentional in everything we did.

As more and more stories were shared, faith stories became part of who we are. The FAITH5 in the congregation became a cross-generational tradition across the congregation in small groups, at meetings, in Sunday school, and in youth groups.

All ages looked forward to and thirsted to be together. They shared Highs and Lows, read Scripture together, related it to their own lives, and became comfortable with prayers and blessings. Faith stories were abundant to

the point they were shared in worship. God's work in the congregation's life was being shared everywhere. It became a way of life. When learning a foreign language, immersion results in fluency. Fluency leads to learning about a culture and then speaking and living the language becomes a way of life. Likewise, immersion in the language of faith in the congregation and at home can lead to fluency in our faith. Fluency forms the culture in congregations. It becomes a way of life.

Gallup Research on the "engaged church" found that increased engagement translates to positive impact inside and outside the local faith community. Engagement in church life leads to spiritual commitment and positive outcomes (life satisfaction, inviting, serving, giving).

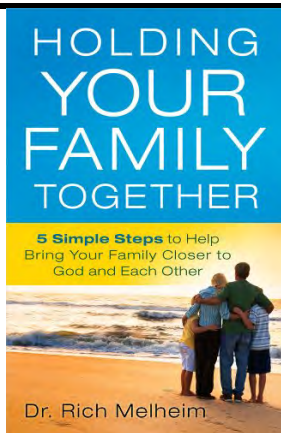
Faith practices modeled and learned well become a way of life. Engagement by the entire faith community is important. According to Gallup, this leads to spiritual commitment and ultimately a serving attitude. If the goal in our congregations is to make disciples, reflecting on ways to engage our people in a faith practice should be a priority.

### Faith Inkubators Resources

- Website: [www.faithink.com](http://www.faithink.com)
- Faith5 Website: <http://faith5.org>
- Faith5 App: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/faith-5/id526158175?mt=8>

### Vibrant Faith Ministries Resources

- Website: [www.vibrantfaith.org](http://www.vibrantfaith.org)
- Vibrant Faith at Home: <http://vibrantfaithathome.org>
- Vibrant Faith at Home App: <http://get.thechurchapp.org/share/vibrant-faith-ministries>
- Taking Faith Home Bulletin Inserts: [http://store.vibrantfaith.org/category\\_s/46.htm](http://store.vibrantfaith.org/category_s/46.htm)
- Faith Talk Cards: [http://store.vibrantfaith.org/product\\_p/ftfk.htm](http://store.vibrantfaith.org/product_p/ftfk.htm)

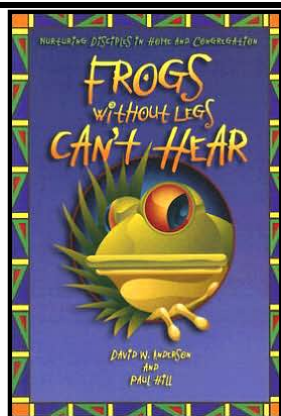


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## Holding Your Family Together: 5 Simple Steps to Help Bring Your Family Closer to God and Each Other

Richard Melheim (Regal, 2013)

Imagine a home where every person feels loved, valued and heard. Imagine a family that seeks God's wisdom, will and Word together. Imagine an intimate, affectionate community where every night is an experience of caring, sharing, comfort and peace. You can make this beautiful picture a reality in your home. *Holding Your Family Together* is a workable, powerful plan based on a simple nightly routine: Share, Read, Talk, Pray, Bless. This is the FAITH<sub>5</sub>, and it has transformed families around the world. No matter your child's age or your family's unique situation, the FAITH<sub>5</sub> can work for you.

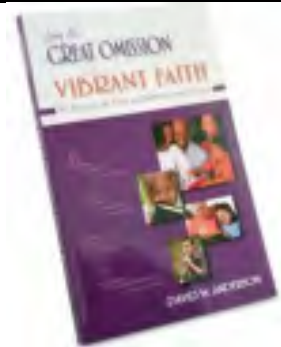


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## Frogs without Legs Can't Hear: Nurturing Disciples in Home and Congregation

David W. Anderson and Paul Hill (Augsburg Fortress, 2003)

David Anderson and Paul Hill challenge church leaders to shift the center of faith formation from the congregation to a shared center involving the home and ministry in daily life. The purpose of the book is to identify the principles and practices that are faith formative, grounded in research and over a decade of pastoral practice. To do this they present five principles that define the congregation-home partnership, four key faith practices that promote faith growth (caring conversation, rituals and traditions, devotions, and service), and three characteristics of effective adult faith bearers.



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## From the Great Omission to Vibrant Faith: The Role of the Home in Renewing the Church

David W. Anderson (Vibrant Faith Ministries, 2009)

Parents play the most important role in the vibrant faith formation of their children. Yet, many congregations fail to equip parents and other caring adults with the tools they need to nurture and grow the faith of the young people in their churches. The good news is that it is not too late to fix this problem. The author, Dr. David Anderson, traces how this "Great Omission" has happened and what we can do to challenge our youth to live lives of faith and service.



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## Vibrant Faith in the Congregation

David W. Anderson (Vibrant Faith Ministries, 2011)

Through their vision called the Vibrant Faith Frame, Vibrant Faith Ministries has helped congregations develop strategies to nurture Christian faith in individuals, homes, congregations, and communities for more than 15 years. David Anderson identifies what these strategies look like in a congregation. With special emphasis on Christian faith formation and community outreach, *Vibrant Faith in the Congregation* illustrates how congregations have successfully applied the Vibrant Faith Frame to various congregational ministries, such as evangelism, Christian education, worship and preaching, youth and family, and stewardship.

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