

Faith5 taken from *Holding Your Family Together*
5 Simple Steps to Help Bring Your Family Closer to God and Each Other

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Introduction

Change your bedtime routine with your family or a trusted friend to spend 5-15 minutes together for conversation and prayer before lights out. Whatever the earliest bedtime will be the meeting time for the family – you can find a fun way to gather everyone by yelling something like “Huddle!” and where to gather (or schedule your phone call with your trusted friend sometime in the evening).

Faith5

- 1. Share** Every member of the family shares the high and low of their day. Other ways to phrase this: What are you most/least grateful for today? What's your thumbs up/thumbs down moment today? When did you feel closest/farthest from God today?
- 2. Read** Read key Bible verse(s) every night; use the same one all week for repetition and memory; even make up hand motions for key words to aid memory – suggested theme verses are below, or use one of your own choosing.
- 3. Talk** Discuss how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. Is God offering comfort? Celebrating with you? Inviting you to do something? With you always?
- 4. Pray** Pray for one another's highs and lows, giving thanks for the highs, perhaps asking for help or guidance with the lows.
- 5. Bless** Bless one another before turning out the lights on the day. These are words of comfort, support, encouragement, even as simple as “God bless you. I love you. Good night.”

Why?

These exercises can help adults and children alike become more aware of God's presence and work in their lives and connect their personal day-to-day story to God's ongoing story. They help build your family or friend relationships with intentional time connecting with one another and God.

Some helpful suggestions:

- Modeling is important – if you can't share your highs and lows (honestly, but appropriately for the age level of your kids), they may not know what kinds of things to say or feel like it's a safe place to be honest.
- Active listening is key – shutting down or putting away all distractions, paying attention to what the other person is telling you instead of thinking about what you are going to say, and yes, maybe asking follow-up or clarifying questions.
- Different personalities will respond to this differently. Be gentle in introducing the sharing; recognize that some personalities may need to think silently and/or ahead of time. Some people are talkative, some will only share a few words. Honor each person for who they are and what they have to share when spoken in sincerity.
- This may not work for some families to do as a whole every night for various reasons, but in particular parental work schedules or business trips, for example. I would suggest, however, finding a way to incorporate some aspect of this intentional relationship/family spiritual time together when it does fit. Sharing highs and lows can be at a meal time, for example, or on the road between activities.

Suggested Theme Verses:

Advent 3 (12/17): John 1:23 about John the Baptist

Relates to Discipleship Practice: Everyone is Welcome, Jesus is Lord

Christmas (12/24): Luke 2:10-12, the angels announce Jesus's birth!

Relates to Discipleship Practice: Jesus is Lord

New Year (12/31): Luke 2: 28-32, Simeon praises God at the sight of the Messiah

Relates to Discipleship Practice: Jesus is Lord

Epiphany (1/7/18): Matthew 2:10-11, the wise men worship Jesus

Relates to Discipleship Practice: Jesus is Lord

Baptism of our Lord (1/14): Mark 1:9-11, Jesus is baptized

Relates to Discipleship Practice: Jesus is Lord