

30. _____ I wonder if my partner feels unwelcome by my family when we visit them.
31. _____ I believe that religion is a personal choice and not a couple's choice, but I'm not certain if that's what my partner believes.
32. _____ We should both respect one another's cultural background, but sometimes I don't believe that my partner respects my ethnic background.
33. _____ When I 'm honest with myself, down deep I believe that one of us has to adopt the other partner's cultural traditions.
34. _____ We often argue about our religious differences and this troubles me.
35. _____ We often argue about our cultural differences and this troubles me.
36. _____ We haven't talked about our future children's religious and spiritual development and this troubles me.
37. _____ If I had to convert to my partner's religious tradition, I believe this might cause me to feel some resentment in the future.
38. _____ I'm not sure if I could handle it if my children were being raised in a different religious background other than my own.
39. _____ Our religious differences are one of our biggest problems.
40. _____ Our cultural differences are one of our biggest problems.
41. _____ I don't believe we feel comfortable talking about our religious differences and this troubles me.
42. _____ I would like to talk more about our religious differences, but I don't believe my partner desires more conversation.
43. _____ When it comes to religion, I sometimes feel caught between either trying to please my partner or family.

44. _____ I don't believe my partner feels comfortable at my parent's home.
45. _____ I don't feel accepted when I attend religious services at my partner's house of worship.
46. _____ I feel as though I need to educate myself more about my partner's religious tradition.
47. _____ I worry about what I will discover if I read more about my partner's religious tradition.
48. _____ I don't know how my religious faith group views interreligious marriage.
49. _____ The fact that I am religious and my partner isn't shouldn't make a difference, but it does.
50. _____ I worry my family will cut themselves off from me if I marry my partner.



Unresolved concerns and questions related to a couple's religious and cultural differences can seriously compromise marital satisfaction. This statement is especially true with regard to interreligious, intercultural couples. Some examples of an interreligious, intercultural couple are as follows: (1) one partner is a Greek Orthodox Christian and another partner is from a non-Christian, non-Greek background such as a Jewish, Muslim or Hindu Faith background. Unfortunately, many such couples who fall in love with one another and are either engaged to be married or are in a serious dating relationship fail to take time to *carefully* examine how their different religious and cultural backgrounds might have a negative impact on personal well being and marital and family satisfaction.

If you are currently either engaged to be married or are involved in a serious dating relationship with someone from a non-Christian background, this self-evaluation exercise will likely be of some assistance to you in your efforts to identify the unique, potential pitfalls and challenges that interreligious, intercultural couples encounter after marriage. The purpose and rationale for including this tool in this section of this web site is to help engaged and dating couples from different religious and cultural backgrounds make healthy, holy decisions.

***A Self-Examination Tool for Engaged Couples
From Different Religious and Cultural
Backgrounds***

Directions

1. **First Step.** Please don't view this questionnaire as a test. Rather, think of it as a self-investigation tool and a couple-investigation tool that can help you and your partner identify the potential challenges and pitfalls that dating couples from different religious and cultural traditions often ignore.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

INTERFAITH WEB SITE

www.Interfaith.goarch.org

Center for Family Care

www.family.goarch.org

OUTREACH & EVANGELISM WEB SITE

www.Outreach.goarch.org

PUBLICATIONS

By Charles Joanides Ph.D., LMFT
*When You Intermarry
Ministering to Intermarried Couples
Attending to Your Marriage*

**Marriage and Family
Some Practical Steps**

Department of Marriage and Family



Produced by the Department of
Marriage and Family
Greek Orthodox Archdioceses of America

2. **Second Step.** The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to complete. Each of you should answer these questions separately.
3. As you're completing the questionnaire you'll notice blank spaces next to the questions. These blank spaces are provided to help you remember some of the more significant questions that you might want to discuss with your partner during the third step of this evaluation process. If you feel a question fits into this category place a check mark in the blank space that's provided. This will help you remember the topics that you want to revisit with your partner when you finally begin examining your answers together.
4. **Third Step.** Once you've both completed the questionnaire begin respectfully considering what you discovered together. One strategy that often works well is if each partner takes a turn identifying questions that are of some concern and require additional conversation and clarification.
5. **Fourth Step.** After an hour of conversation has passed, if you haven't finished your discussion, consider re-scheduling a time with your partner so that the two of you may complete this exercise.

Multiple Serious Disagreements

If you, your partner, or both of you, discern that enough serious, unresolved disagreements exist that might require outside help, please consider consulting your pastor(s) and/or a trained couples professional who has experience working with intermarried couples. It's better to admit and address serious issues now rather than hope they will go away on their own. In most cases they don't. They simply linger and become more troublesome for couples after marriage.

1. _____ Sometimes I feel as though I'm betraying my family when I think about marrying my partner.
2. _____ Sometimes I wonder if my partner feels as though he or she is betraying their

- family when the subject of marriage comes up between us.
3. _____ I really don't care much for the foods and cuisine that is part of my partner's ethnic tradition.
 4. _____ Our religious beliefs are very different and this really troubles me.
 5. _____ I often wonder how we will worship God together because our religious backgrounds are so different.
 6. _____ I'm not certain if interreligious marriage enriches children's lives.
 7. _____ I worry that our different religious beliefs may have a negative impact on our future children's religious development.
 8. _____ I'm not certain if intercultural marriages enrich children's lives.
 9. _____ I sometimes worry about which cultural traditions we will adopt in our home.
 10. _____ I worry that our religious and cultural differences may have a negative impact on our marriage.
 11. _____ My knowledge of my partner's religious and cultural background is very limited and I wonder if that's unhealthy.
 12. _____ I grew up in a neighborhood where there wasn't a great deal of diversity and I wonder how this will affect my attitude toward my partner's different religious and cultural background.
 13. _____ We both have a strong connection to our religious background and this worries me.
 14. _____ We both have a strong connection to our ethnic background and this worries me.
 15. _____ My parents were from different religious traditions and I wonder if their arguments related to religion will be repeated in my future marriage.

16. _____ My parents are from the same religious tradition and I sometimes wish my partner's religious background was the same as my own.
17. _____ My religious tradition is very important to me.
18. _____ I believe that the teachings that are part of my religious tradition are more accurate than other religious traditions.
19. _____ Being able to attend religious services matters a great deal to me.
20. _____ Even though I believe that my relationship with God is very personal, it still matters to me that we can talk about religion together.
21. _____ My partner's strong need to attend religious services worries me.
22. _____ If my partner loses his or her religious good standing because we decide to get married this will bother me.
23. _____ I worry about how our different religious beliefs may affect our marriage.
24. _____ I don't feel comfortable in my partner's house of worship.
25. _____ I don't understand my partner's religion.
26. _____ I could never convert to another religion and I wonder if this might cause some problems in the future.
27. _____ If I converted, I would feel as though I'm losing a part of me.
28. _____ It matters to me that my partner doesn't have a strong belief in God.
29. _____ My family would be hurt if I converted and I wonder how this will affect my future relationship with them.