

Unresolved concerns and questions related to a couple's religious and cultural differences can seriously compromise marital satisfaction and family stability. This is especially true when Greek Orthodox Christians marry non-Christians. As a result, this self-evaluation exercise has been developed to assist dating and engaged couples - where one partner is Greek Orthodox, and the other is from a non-Christian tradition - identify the unique, potential pitfalls and challenges that they might encounter after marriage. For more information related to the Orthodox Church's position regarding interreligious marriage, please consider reviewing the other articles in this section of the Web site.

A Self Evaluation Tool for Engaged Couples
From Different Religious and Cultural Backgrounds

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Directions

1. Do not view this questionnaire as a test. Rather, think of it as a self-investigation tool that can help you and your partner identify many of the potential challenges and pitfalls that dating and engaged couples from different religious and cultural traditions often ignore or minimize as unimportant.
2. The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to complete. Each of you should answer the questions separately. As you're completing the questionnaire, you'll notice blank spaces next to each question. These blank spaces are provided to help you remember some of the more significant questions that you believe require more discussion. 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 questions you'd like to revisit with your partner when you finally begin comparing your answers.
3. Once you've both completed the questionnaire, begin respectfully considering the results together. One strategy that often works well is if each partner takes a turn identifying questions that seem to require additional conversation and clarification.
4. If you fail to finish your discussion after an hour has lapsed, consider rescheduling 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 multiple, 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 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. ____ Our religious beliefs are very different, and this really troubles me.
4. ____ I often wonder how we will worship God together because our religious backgrounds are so different.
5. ____ I've sometimes wondered how an inter-religious marriage might affect our future children's religious and spiritual development.
6. ____ If we were to marry, I worry about which cultural traditions we will adopt in our home.
7. ____ I worry that our religious and cultural differences may have a negative impact on our marriage.
8. ____ My knowledge of my partner's religious and cultural background is very limited, and I wonder if this will create problems between us if we marry.
9. ____ We both have a strong connection to our religious background, and this worries me.
10. ____ We both have a strong connection to our ethnic background and this worries me.
11. ____ My parents were from different religious traditions and I worry that their arguments related to religion will be repeated in my future marriage.
12. ____ I sometimes wish my partner's religious background was the same as my own.

13. _____ My religious tradition is very important to me and I wonder if my partner respects this.
14. _____ I believe that the teachings that are part of my religious tradition are more accurate than other religious traditions.
15. _____ Attending religious services is important to me, and I wonder if this will create future marital problems.
16. _____ Even though I believe my relationship with God is personal, it is still important to me that we can talk about religion together.
17. _____ If my partner loses his or her religious good standing because we decide to get married, this will bother me.
18. _____ I don't feel comfortable in my partner's house of worship.
19. _____ I could never convert to another religion, and I wonder if this might cause some problems in the future.
20. _____ If I converted, I would feel as though I'm losing a part of myself.
21. _____ I'm concerned that my partner doesn't have a strong belief in God.
22. _____ My family would be hurt if I converted, and I wonder how this will affect my future relationship with them.
23. _____ I'm concerned that my partner feels unwelcome by my family, and I wonder how this will affect us if we chose to marry.
24. _____ I believe that religion is a personal choice, and not a couple choice, but I'm not certain if that's what my partner believes.
25. _____ We should both respect one another's ethnic background, but sometimes I don't believe that my partner respects my ethnic background.
26. _____ When I'm honest with myself, I believe that one of us has to adopt the other partner's cultural traditions.
27. _____ We often argue about our religious differences, and this troubles me.
28. _____ We often argue about our cultural differences, and this troubles me.
29. _____ We haven't talked about our future children's religious and spiritual development and this omission troubles me.

30. _____ If I had to convert to my partner's religious tradition, I believe this might cause me to feel resentment in the future.
31. _____ I'm not sure if I could accept the fact that our future children were being raised in a religious tradition other than my own.
32. _____ Our religious differences are one of our biggest problems.
33. _____ Our cultural differences are one of our biggest problems.
34. _____ I would like to talk more about our religious differences, but I don't believe my partner desires more conversation.
35. _____ When it comes to religion, I sometimes feel caught between trying to please my partner or my family.
36. _____ I don't feel accepted when I attend religious services in my partner's house of worship.
37. _____ I worry about what I will discover if I read more about my partner's religious tradition.
38. _____ I don't know how my religious faith group views inter-religious marriage.
39. _____ The fact that I am religious, and my partner isn't, shouldn't make a difference, but it does.
40. _____ I don't know how my partner's religious faith group views inter-religious marriage.
41. _____ I worry that my family will cut themselves off from me if I marry my partner.
42. _____ I worry that my partner family will cut themselves off from us if we marry.