

## St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, Tampa FL



### Your Guide Before Marriage

**What's your expectations in marriage compared to the other person**

- **Each point on this questionnaire can cause conflict in marriage**

This form should be **filled separately** then compare the answers from the 2 people

#### **1- Spiritually**

- How many times do you go to church per week now?
- How many times do you want to go to church after marriage ?
- For what ?
- Do you have a father of confession?
  - If yes, how often do you confess ?
- After marriage, do you prefer to have the same father of confession or different ?
- How do you expect to practice prayer and Bible after marriage:
- Together or separate ?
  - If together, Agpeya or not :
  - When? Morning or evening
- What fasts do you fast now ?
  - Wednesday & Friday?
  - Great Lent?
  - Nativity fast?
  - St. Mary's fast?
  - Apostles fast ?
- What fasts do you plan to fast after marriage ?
  - Wednesday & Friday?
  - Great Lent?
  - Nativity fast?
  - St. Mary's fast?
  - Apostles fast ?
- **For people from non-Coptic background** and joining the church:
- Are you planning to attend your church (non-Coptic) after getting baptized in the Coptic church ?
- If the person is honest and said yes, then it's very important to agree on what church the children will attend. It is **not** recommended at all to agree that the kids will go both churches (Coptic and non-Coptic). This caused a lot of confusion to the children and led to children leaving both churches.

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### 2- Household responsibilities and chores : Answer “I”, “You”, or “WE”

- Cooking
- Washing dishes
- Laundry
- Ironing
- Taking out the trash
- Pay the bills
- Buying grocery
- House cleaning
- Having a pet ? YES or NO
  - If yes: **Answer “I” or “You”**
  - Take the pet out
  - Clean the pet
  - Feed the pet
  - Taking the pet to the vet.

### 3- Leisure time/ hobbies : It is important to see if there are common interests

- How do you like to spend your free time ?
- Do you have common friends ?
- How many times will you both go out with friends per week ?
- Can any of you have time alone with his/her friends ?
- If yes, how often?
- How often to go on vacation per year ?
- Can any of you go on a trip with friends alone ?
  - if yes, how many times a year?
- Favorite places for vacations ?
- What are your expectations when you are on vacation – to relax or to go sightseeing as much as possible?

### 4- Children

- Do you wanna have kids ?
  - If yes, how many?
- When do you plan to have kids ?
- After having kids, will you move to a bigger place to not ?
- How to discipline your kids ?
- What do you want to carry over from your family into your future family ?
- What schools for kids, public or private ?
  - If private, can you afford it ?
- Use a school bus or drop them off?
  - If drop off, who will do it ?
  
- What if God does not give us kids, will you consider other methods to have kids?
- If yes, what methods are approved by the church ?
  - *(In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) is approved by the Church as long as:*

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1- The eggs and the sperms are from a married couple,  
2-The fertilized eggs are not discarded)

- (the fertilization must be from the married couple. Other embryos cannot be destroyed or received by or donated to individuals outside the marriage.)
- "Surrogacy" is not acceptable since a third party is involved and will be the carrier of the fertilized egg)
- What methods are approved for birth control ? *(The birth control method that is acceptable by the Church is if it does not interfere with a fertilized egg, any contraceptive method that brings about killing the fertilized ovum is considered a sin of murder and is prohibited)*
- "Plan B" or "Morning/Day After Pill" : Not approved until it is approved it can prevent fertilization from occurring.

### 5- Finances

- Who will manage finances?
- Joint or separate BANK account ?
  - If separate, are you going to have access to both accounts?
- Do you pay tithes (1/10 of every paycheck)?
- Are you planning to pay tithes after marriage ?*(Paying tithes is a biblical commandment Malachi 3:10)*
- Open a savings account or invest ?
  - If invest, in what ?
  - If savings, how?
- Are you gonna have Budget for vacations or not?
- Do you have debts (student loans, credit cards, ..)
  - If yes, how are you planning to pay after marriage
- Who will handle the payment of bills?
- Will it be ok if your spouse gives money to his/her family if they are in need?
- Will it be ok if you give money to his/her family if they are in need?
- Do you have other sources of money other than salary
- Do you own any properties in or outside the US
- Do you have bank account outside US

### 6- In-laws/ Extended family dynamics

- How many times per week to visit your parents if they are locals ?
- How many times to visit your in-laws if they are locals ?
- How many times travel "(drive/fly) to see your family if they are not locals ?
- How many times travel "(drive/fly) to see your in-laws if they are not locals ?
- How many times your family / in-laws can come and visit if not locals ?
  - How many days can they stay per visit ?
- Where spend Holidays/feasts : **Answer "Mine" or "Yours"**
  - Thanksgiving :
  - American Christmas Dec 25th:
  - Coptic Nativity Jan 7th:

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- New Year's Eve:
- Resurrection feast :
- Can everything be discussed with parents/in-laws: **YES or NO**
  - If not, what is it ?
- After marriage, should your spouse know everything that happens with your family? Yes or No
  - If No, like what ?
- What occasions to attend with your extended family events ?(cousins,uncles, ..): **Answer YES or NO**
  - Weddings
  - Showers
  - Engagements
  - Newborns
  - Baptisms
- Can you attend family events by yourself if you can't go with your spouse ?
- Can your spouses attend family events without you if you can't go ?
- Will you be ok if one of the in-laws move in to live with you in case of death or disability of the living in-law ?
- Will you be ok if one of your parents move in to live with you in case of death or disability of the other parent ?

### **7- Dwelling**

- Where do you want to live once you get married (apartment or house)?
- If apartment, for how long?
- Will the home environment reflect the interests, wishes, and ideas of both?
  - If yes, which room will be for you ?

### **8- Emotions / feelings**

- What's your own love language ?
- What's the love language of the other person?
- Will there be a time to set and talk regularly ?
  - If yes, when ?
- Share everything with your spouse or are there exceptions?
  - If there are exceptions, what are these ?

### **9- Conflicts**

- What's your strategy to handle conflicts?
- Is there anyone you would like to involve when there are conflicts?
- If yes, who?
- If no, what if you both can't solve the conflict, whom will you go to for help ?
  - Your parents
  - In-laws
  - Priests
  - Friends
  - Counselors
- Are there certain topics that you think you should be the decision maker if there is a conflict of

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opinion ?

- If yes, what is it ?
- Are there certain topics that you think the other person should be the decision maker if there is a conflict of opinion ?
  - If yes, what is it

### 10- Job/career

- Whose career should have priority in marriage ?
- What are the potentials for disruptions, moves, extra hours at work?

### 11 - Physical intimacy

- How important is it for you to have sexual intimacy?
- Would you continue to have intimacy after having kids ? *(God provided for sexual activity to include pleasure so to encourage love and unity with sanctity between the married couple, and not only for the sole purpose to reproduce offspring.)*
- Who will initiate intimacy?
- To have a schedule or leave it open?
  - If there is a schedule, can you change it if there is a need?
- What if the other person is not available, are you going to insist or wait?

**\*\*\*The following section should be discussed after at least three months of dating (courting) or whenever you are comfortable to open up with the other person.**

- **But it HAS TO BE DONE BEFORE ANY OFFICIAL step such as engagement/public proposal.**
- **If you are already engaged, then it has to be done BEFORE the wedding for integrity and honesty. This can cause some serious consequences after marriage.\*\*\***

### 12- Do you have or had any of the following:

- Cancer
- Heart surgery
- Brain surgery
- Liver transplant
- Kidney transplant
- Anything caused infertility
- Diabetes
- Major accidents
- Bipolar
- PTSD
- Clinical depression
- Social anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts
- Sexual abuse when you were young
- Rape
- Homosexual behavior
- Prison time

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- Legal issues
- Previous marriages inside or outside church
- Have kids from previous marriage or relationship
- Pay alimony
- Pay Child support
- Abortion
  
- Addiction (the following list can be **Casual behavior/use** or there is **Dependency**. If it is casual use then the person has to show that s/he can stop **immediately and completely** and for a long time at least 3 months. If the person failed then there is **Dependency**. In this case, the person will need a professional help and it is **NOT** recommended to pursue the relationship until treatment is **completed**)
  - Drugs (<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/commonly-used-drugs-charts>)
  - Cannabis (Marijuana/Pot/Weed)
  - Painkillers
  - Alcohol
  - Eating disorder
  - Gambling (Lottery, cryptocurrency, cards, sports betting, casino games, online gambling)
  - Video-gaming
  - Sex (opposite or same sex)
  - Porn (watching occasionally still sinful but it's not considered addiction if there no dependency) if it's occasionally then no need to mention it if you are repenting and confessing regularly)
  - Tobacco/Nicotine/vaping/Hookah
  - Shoplifting
  - Self-cutting

**If any of the previous points are still unresolved, then it is Extremely important that you do not pursue any official step (proposal, engagement or marriage) until this issue is resolved**

**(After finishing separately, compare the answers, start discussing together the most surprising answers in the other person's paper)**

**Whether they both agree or decide not to continue the relationship, all these points should be discussed with the priest to find out what is the correct teaching of the Church**