

Spirituality, Religion and Faith

Spirituality  Religion

Figure A

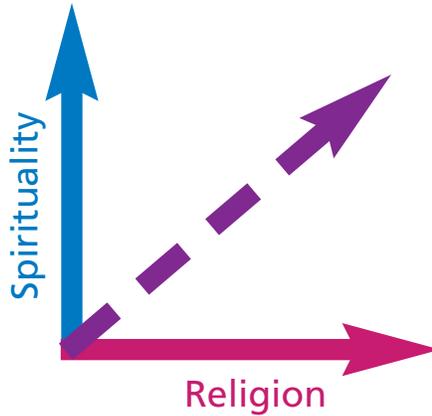


Figure B

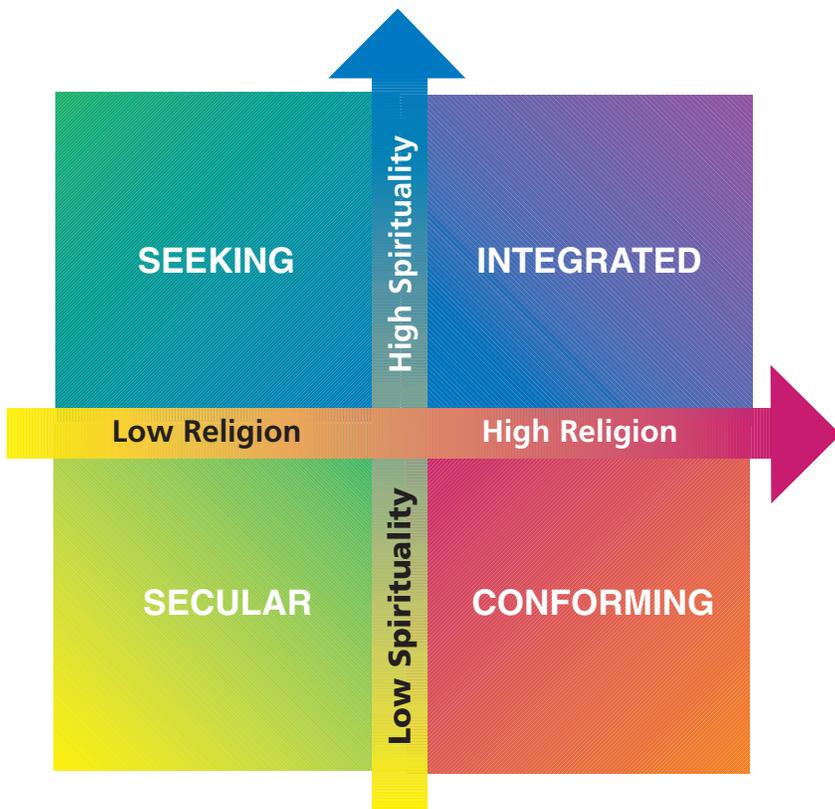
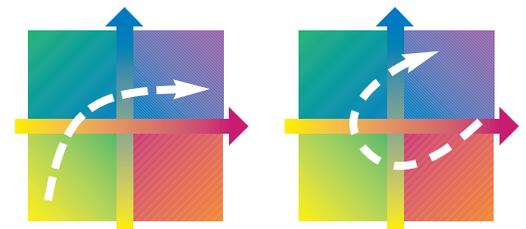


Figure C



Faith Journeys

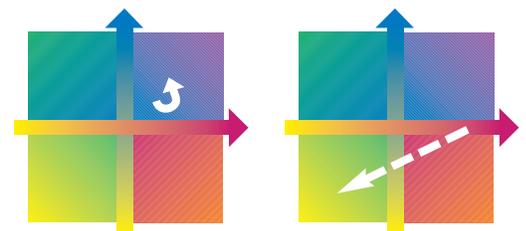


Figure D

Reaching the “Spiritual but not Religious” Couple

Things you could do right away

- 1) “Track” your couples if they leave your parish
- 2) Use Fr. Rob Ruhnke’s ideas
 - a) eat a meal with the couple
 - b) invite them to join you for liturgy
 - c) be with the couple at their wedding
 - d) invite them back after the wedding
 - e) send them a postcard on their first anniversary
- 3) redefine marriage preparation to include the first few years of marriage
 - a) active newly-married programs
 - b) passive newly married outreaches
- 4) Include a “service project” as part of marriage preparation..
- 5) Inquire “When have you as a couple felt closest to God?” Honor their answers.
- 6) Inquire “You have decided that your relationship needs the structure of marriage. Why isn’t the relationship itself enough?” Their hard-won reasons from their own experience are often very similar to the reasons why their spirituality needs the structure of religion.
- 7) Use **Spirituality and Religion in Your Marriage: A Reflective Process for Engaged Couples**
- 8) Do some inner work. What has been my life path? Can I give to others the same understanding I would hope to receive?

Things that would take some work

- 1) As part of marriage preparation, give them the names of parishioners involved in 10 different ministries. They need to pick one ministry/person to interview about their faith journey and the ministry they are involved in. The interviewees know this is not just busy work, but evangelization, and they include a hearty invitation to the engaged couple to get involved in the ministry.

- 2) Emphasize “the story of my faith journey.” Offer your own, and ask for theirs.
- 3) Increase the ritual element in marriage preparation. For instance, the Unitas marriage preparation program, modeled after the RCIA, has a Rite of Enrollment, a halfway-through Celebration of the Journey rite, and a concluding Celebration, all of which are fairly short and which take place at the Sunday Eucharist.
- 4) Interchurch couples are not a monolithic group. Determine whether their issue is religious differences or religious indifference. Proceed accordingly.
- 5) Offer some support for parents of children who are not church-involved.
- 6) Make sure each engaged couple receives at least one **personal** prayer letter during their engagement. Put the picture of engaged couples up in the back of church.
- 7) Do some inner work: Do we know what kind of soil the seed has fallen on?
Do we assume we know?

Things that require a major investment of time and energy

- 1) Develop what Fr. John Cusick calls “a preferential option for the young adult.”
- 2) Keep in mind that a vibrant parish community is the best attraction.
- 3) Make the Eucharist – understanding it, experiencing it – a central part of marriage preparation.
- 4) As a parish, do some inner work. What do we look like to a person in their 20’s or 30’s who is searching for an authentic path?



*Spirituality and
Religion in Your Marriage*

A REFLECTIVE PROCESS FOR ENGAGED COUPLES

JAMES HEALY, PH.D.



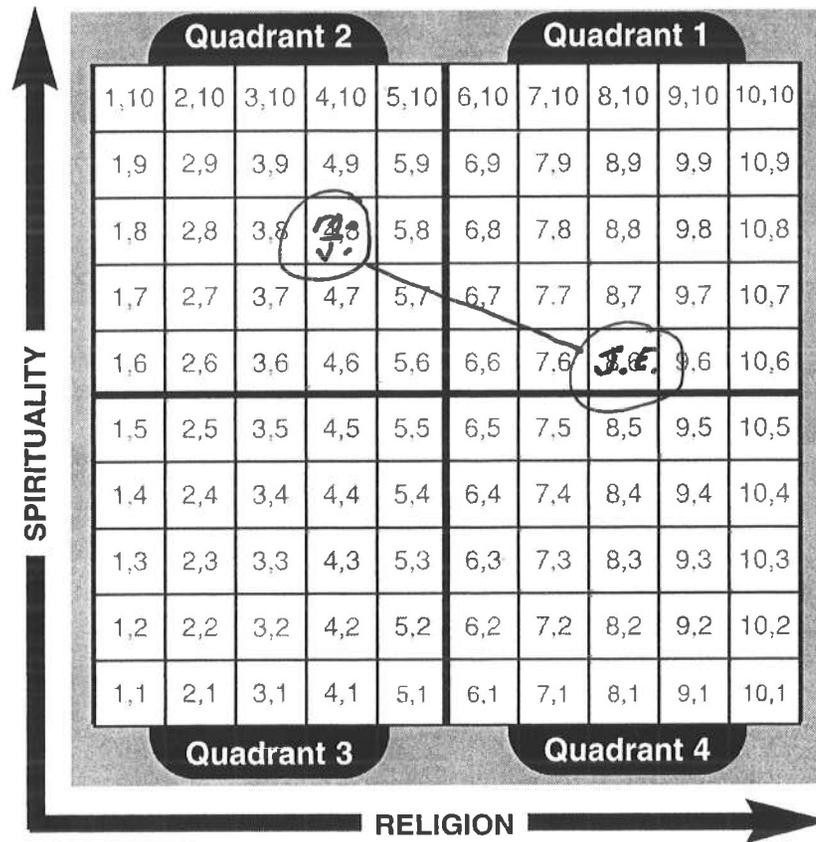
*Espiritualidad y Religión
en el Matrimonio*

UN PROCESO DE REFLEXIÓN PARA PAREJAS COMPROMETIDAS

JAMES HEALY, PH.D.

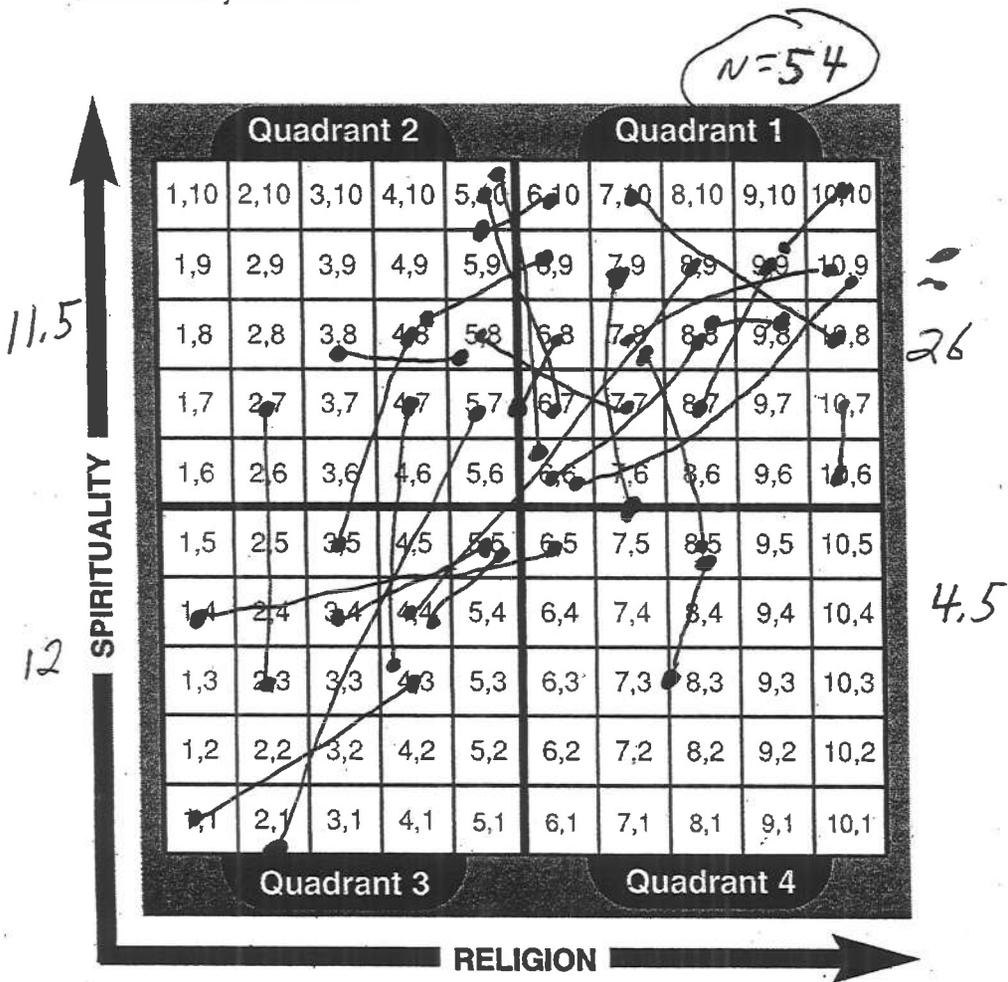
Plot Your Scores Here

Now on the grid below, please find the box that corresponds to your two numbers (Religion number first, then Spirituality). Then each of you please put your initials in your box.



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habits of faith practice that carry us forward when we would otherwise be inclined to stop. "Don't let urgent things get in the way of important things," says noted writer Steven Covey, and religious practice is one way of making sure that important things retain their priority.

For most of us, in all the quadrants, self-deception is very common. We tend to judge other people—often quite harshly—by their actions, and ourselves—often quite gently—by our best inclinations. "I'm really a good person; I just had a hard day," or "Other people were really hard on me today. Nobody can blame me for lashing out the way I did."

Practiced correctly, religious involvement puts a curb on self-deception. It offers a moral code that we didn't make up, and that we aren't wholly in charge of interpreting. Almost all of us are weak in some area of "good living."—maybe in our commitment to prayer or regular reflection, maybe in actually reaching out to those who have less, perhaps in political or community activity for the common good. Church involvement can open our eyes to things we might otherwise not consider, and allows us to offer our insights and our support to others who are on the same path. We value your involvement, and we have many things of value to offer you.