



All You Ever Wanted to Know About Jewish Weddings, But Were Too Afraid to Ask

Rabbi David S. Gruber

www.interfaithweddingrabbi.net



My Story

- 8th generation rabbi
- Grew up in Israel, served in IDF, ordained Orthodox
- Ran Jewish religious/educational organizations on 3 continents
- Left Orthodox Judaism
- Officiated about 430 interfaith and Jewish weddings all over the world since 2008
- Development and Communications Director, Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance



Overview

- How many Jews are there in the United States, and where do they live?
- What denominations exist in today's Judaism, and how do they differ from each other?
- What does it take for a marriage to be legally valid in Judaism?
- What are the essential elements of the Jewish wedding ceremony?
- What are some popular customs and rituals Jews include in their weddings?
- Q&A

American Jews by the Numbers

- 6.9 million in the USA (48% of the world Jewish population)
- 2.1% of the American population
- 80% of Jews live in 10 states - New York, California, Florida, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Maryland, Texas, Ohio
- Texas 166,505
- 0.6% of the Texas population

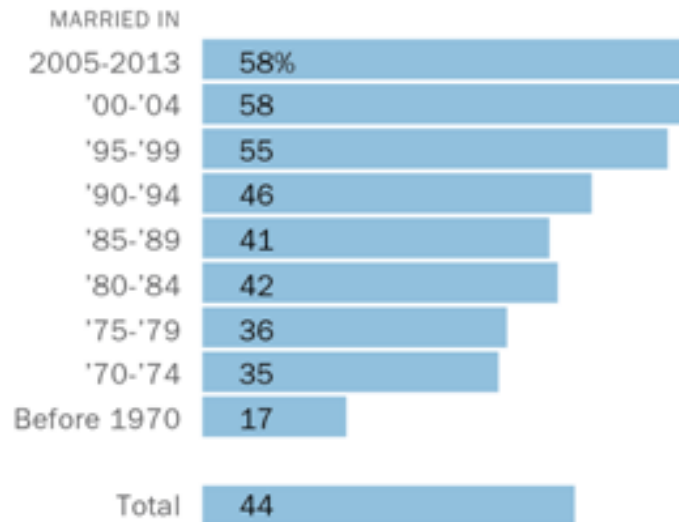
Two Jews – Three Opinions

- **Orthodox** – follow traditional Jewish Law – 10%
- **Conservative** - follow traditional Jewish Law, with adjustments and modifications – 14%
- **Reform** – autonomous choice – follow what is meaningful to the individual – 28%
- **Reconstructionist** – theologically closer to Reform, religious practice closer to Conservative – 2%
- **Unaffiliated, Secular, Cultural, Ethnic** – 46%

Jews and Interfaith Marriage

Intermarriage, by Year of Marriage

% of Jews with a non-Jewish spouse ...



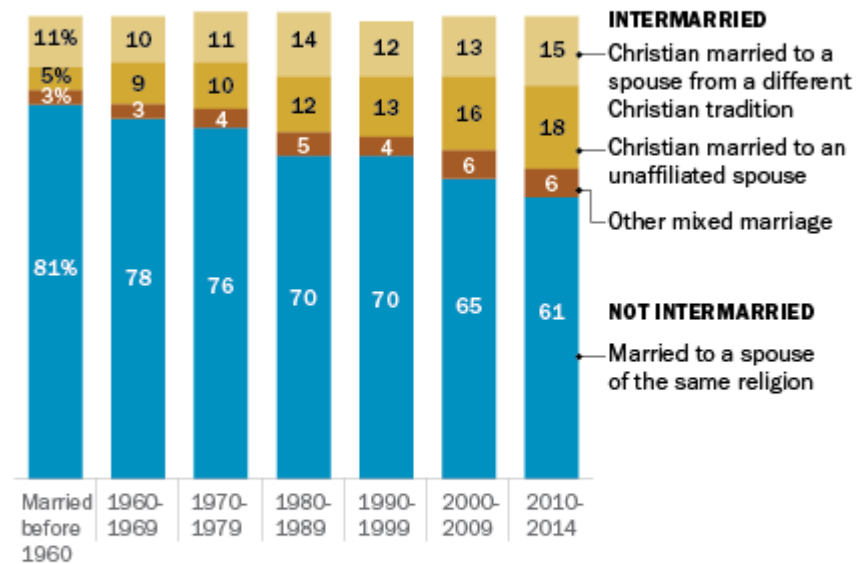
Source: Pew Research Center 2013 Survey of U.S. Jews, Feb. 20-June 13, 2013. Based on current, intact marriages.

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Interfaith Marriage in the USA

Recently Wed Americans More Likely to Marry Outside the Faith

Based on those who are currently married, by year married



Notes: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Evangelical Protestantism, mainline Protestantism and historically black Protestantism are treated as separate religions. "Christian married to an unaffiliated spouse" includes unaffiliated respondents married to a Christian.

Source: 2014 Religious Landscape Study, June 4-Sept. 30, 2014.

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Officiating Interfaith Weddings

- Orthodox, Conservative and Most Reform Rabbis – NO
- Some Reform Rabbis – YES, with conditions
- Small minority of Rabbis (like me) – YES, with no conditions. It is my mission to be the one who says, “You love each other, and you want a rabbi to officiate your wedding? Wow! Let’s celebrate that!”

You Gotta to Know...

- What denomination is the rabbi from?
- What requirements does the rabbi have?
 - Verification of religious status
 - Pre-marital education/counseling
 - Scheduling
 - Dress – modesty, kittel, tallit, kippot
 - Witness qualifications
 - Food and beverage
 - Specific non-negotiable ceremony wording
 - Gender segregation

Essential

- Mikveh
- Ketubah
- Ceremony 1 – Erusin
 - Wine
 - Blessings
 - Ring(s)
- Ceremony 2 - Nisu'in
 - Chuppah
 - Seven Blessings
 - Yichud (Ashkenazic)



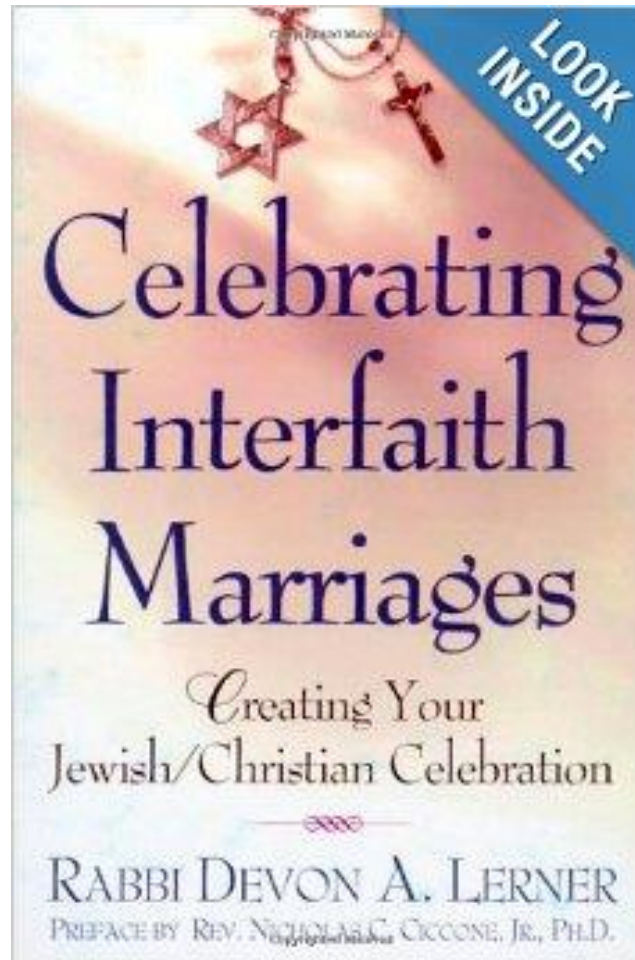
Customary

- Aufruf
- Tena'im=Conditions
- Tish=Jewish Vegas
- Bedeken
- Circling
- Open Blessings
- Remarks
- Priestly Blessing
- Breaking of the Glass
- Festive meal



Best Book

<http://www.amazon.com/Celebrating-Interfaith-Marriages-Creating-Christian/dp/0805060839>



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Questions, Comments, Queries???

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