

In Theory:

In a recent sermon, Rabbi Donald Weber, of Temple Rodeph Torah, in New Jersey, reportedly offered to personally pay for six-month memberships to the Jewish singles matchmaking website JDate to any singles in the congregation who asked. The idea was to help bolster the dwindling American Jewish population in the face of national surveys that say about half of American Jews are marrying outside of the Jewish faith. What do you think of online dating services that match people within the same faith?

It's a real challenge today for young people to meet prospective marriage partners. For individuals who consider their faith tradition a fundamental part of life, the prospect can be even more daunting. The variety of places to meet possible mates can seem few and far between. Within local Catholic parishes, there was a time when young adults groups were vibrant parts of community life. Many people I know from the generation above my own met and married at their local church. Today the Church no longer attracts young people as the social center it once was where individuals come and meet others.

Dating services that match people within the same faith can be a good way of making introductions. Connecting those with similar values, interests, and religious views is a good start but the real work of relationship would obviously have to come once the initial contact is made. The courtship and eventual marriage would take place only after all other areas of life are explored and found to be in synch.

I have personally witnessed the marriages of couples who had met on Catholic dating services. Some of them had spent years looking in all of the conventional places without success. An online dating service was able to make that vital connection otherwise missed.

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