

# INTERFAITH POCKET BROCHURE

Dignity & Respect Tip 12  
Build Cultural Awareness



# SOME COMMON FAITH TRADITIONS

At UPMC, an important aspect of providing high-quality care is awareness of the diverse needs of our patients and their families. This pocket brochure provides a brief overview of religious backgrounds and related information, to assist in better understanding and meeting those needs.

The brochure does not offer theological explanations but basic information about the beliefs and practices of a variety of faith traditions. Each faith is presented in its traditional form. An expanded listing of faiths is available on the Infonet in the *Interfaith Guide: Awareness of the Religious and Spiritual Needs of Our Patients and Families* at <http://infonet.upmc.com/OurOrganization/HCD/Hospitals/PrSh/PastoralCare/Pages/default.aspx>.

Whether patients are strong in a religious tradition or have no religious beliefs, we recognize that all patients deserve dignity and respect. Thank you in advance for your compassionate care.

A special thanks to the **Office of Spiritual Care, UPMC Presbyterian Patient and Family Support Services**, for their vision and creation of the content for this brochure.

Sources for the information in this brochure are *A Handbook for Chaplains*, *A Hospital Handbook on Multiculturalism and Religion*, and *Multi-faith Information Manual*, along with consultation with local religious leaders.

## CROSS REFERENCE TO FAITHS

This pocket brochure provides a very brief listing of faith traditions — not all faiths have separate entries. The cross references below may be helpful to find a particular faith in the brochure (arranged alphabetically). For an expanded listing of faiths, see the online *Interfaith Guide: Awareness of the Religious and Spiritual Needs of Our Patients and Families* at <http://infonet.upmc.com/OurOrganization/HCD/Hospitals/PrSh/PastoralCare/Pages/default.aspx>

### See “Mormon” for:

LDS (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

### See “Orthodox Christian” for:

Orthodox Church, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox, and others

### See “Protestant, Nondenominational, and Independent Christian Churches” for:

AME, Anglican/Episcopal, Apostolic, Baptist, Charismatic, Church of God, Church of God in Christ, Evangelical, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and many others

### See “Roman Catholic” for:

Catholic Church, Byzantine Catholic

## NATIVE OR INDIGENOUS AMERICAN

500 tribes pre-date Columbus, with a common religious, cultural world view and different tribal practices.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- Belief in the “Creator” (Great Spirit) and Lesser Spirits.
- There are 500+ Indigenous American tribes in the USA.
- Consult patient and/or family for their tribal costumes and practices.
- Shaman and medicine men were sometimes said to communicate with the spirits.
- Tribal Elders lead ceremonies to foster tribal harmony.
- Universe is sacred, benevolent, living being.
- There is interconnectedness with all life.
- Use sacred objects, prayer pouches or medicine bags not to be touched by those outside the tribe.

## Diet

- Nutrition is significant. -both physically and spirituality- for Native Americans. Many abstain from modern processed foods.
- Corn as well as tobacco, sage, and sweet grass are used in many rituals and considered sacred by some Native Americans

## Dress/Modesty

- Native American men and women usually wear western style clothing.
- Traditional clothes are worn for ceremonies and special events. Ceremonial dress may include carved masks, weapons, and robes depending on tribal tradition.
- A prayer pouch or medicine bag may be worn by ill tribe members. These should not be removed without the patient's permission.

## Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Root of sickness is lack of harmony.
- Consult elder of the patient's own tribe.
- Tribal elder may perform bedside ceremony.
- Death is not feared; the afterlife is a world of peace.
- A dying patient may request special foods.
- Four day wake by family and friends.
- Pipe ceremony may precede burial.

## Organ Donation

- Many Native Americans oppose organ donation due to the spiritual belief that they must take their bodies intact with them into the afterlife.
- Consult the patient or family.

## Significant Dates

- June: Feast of the Great Spirit/Great Mystery encompasses Mother Earth and Father Sky, honoring Deity as *Orenda (Iroquois)*, *Asgaya Galun Lati (Cherokee)*, *Wakan Tanka (Lakota)*, and *Awonawilona (Zuni)*.
- August: Birth of the White Buffalo signifies the return of White Buffalo Woman (i.e., manifestation of Star Goddess *Wohpe*), who gave the sacred peace pipe to the Lakota people.

## Other Considerations

- Death is not feared; afterlife is a world of peace
- Dying patient may request special foods
- Autopsies are viewed as a desecration to the body but not forbidden.

## AMISH

A Protestant movement for strict Biblical teaching beginning in Switzerland in the 1500's to form separatist communities range from strict to moderate.

## Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- Basic Protestant Christian beliefs
- God is Triune as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Salvation and eternal life by acceptance of Jesus Christ, God's atoning, sacrifice on a cross for sin.
- Central text: Bible
- Life is sacred; body is respected
- Focus on love of God, love of neighbor, a strong work ethic, nonviolence, and forgiveness.
- Sacraments include adult baptism, and communion.
- Need authorized deacon or bishop for sacraments.
- Modesty, simplicity of dress and housing.
- Amish refrain from the use of electricity, cars and technological products.
- Many use modern medicine.
- Some refuse insurance and Social Security.

## Diet

- The Amish diet varies by region.
- Most families maintain gardens even if they live in urban areas.
- Most meals are made from scratch.
- Meals are very much about unity and sharing time with family and community.
- The Amish value nutritious meals that promote a healthy lifestyle.

## Dress/Modesty

- The Amish style of dress is one of the most notably recognized displays of their faith and worldview. It follows the principle of humility and simplicity.
- Most articles of clothing are made at home by a female member of the family.

## Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Few use high-risk or costly health care
- Many prefer same-gender caregiver
- Many women consult their husbands about health decisions.
- Many prefer to die at home, not in the hospital.
- Autopsy is permitted by legal inquiry only.
- Burial is preferred.

- Often, Amish women are buried in their wedding dress and apron or a white dress.
- The body is buried in a hand-dug grave with a simple headstone.
- Following the funeral/burial, friends and family gather for a communal meal.

### Blood Products/Organ Donation

- There are no specific rules in the Amish faith forbidding receiving blood products or transfusions or donating or receiving organs.

### Significant Dates

- Christmas: December 25, celebration of Jesus' birth.
- Easter: Celebration of the death, resurrection, and eventual ascension of Jesus to Heaven.
- Good Friday: The Friday before Easter that commemorates the day Christ was crucified and buried.
- Palm Sunday: The Sunday before Easter that commemorates Jesus' return to Jerusalem before he was crucified.
- Sabbath: A day of rest and worship observed on Sunday.

## BAHA'I FAITH

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- The oneness of God, the unity of religion, and humanity
- All prophets have a divine origin
- Religion should unify humans into a single race
- There is no clergy; all members are equal in status
- Local Spiritual Assemblies are administrative
- Sacred texts: Book of Laws (Kitab-i-Aqdas); and 100 others

### Diet

- Many Baha'is are vegetarian, but the faith has no binding dietary requirements.
- The consumption of alcoholic beverages (including in cooking preparations), narcotics, and drugs not prescribed for medical reasons is forbidden.
- Members of the Baha'i faith fast March 2 through 21 from sunrise to sunset.

### Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Healing requires physical and spiritual treatments
- Local Bahá'í volunteers can pray with the patient
- The body must not be moved more than a day's travel, or the body may Only be transported a distance of one day travel

- Autopsy or cremation is not permitted
- Baha'is are encouraged to regard death as a "Messenger of Love" for the deceased, despite their own pain at the loss of a loved one.
- It is incumbent upon Baha'is to write a will which sets forth deeds the deceased wishes to have performed in his or her name.
- These deeds will have an effect upon the soul in the next world.
- Baha'is believe in the afterlife and, therefore, treat the body with great respect after death.
- The coffin should be made of crystal, stone, or hard fine wood.
- There is just one ceremonial requirement at a Baha'i funeral: the recitation of the Prayer for the Dead for any believer over the age of maturity.
- The body is to be washed carefully and wrapped in a shroud.
- May not be embalmed or cremated unless required by law. Teachings require that the body be allowed to decompose naturally.

### Organ Donation

- There is no prohibition against donating one's organs or body for scientific purposes.

### Significant Dates

- The Baha'i calendar has 19 months with 19 days in each month.
- There are 11 holy days in the Baha'i calendar.
- On the various holidays, Baha'is abstain from work and participate in devotional readings, music, and fellowship.
- March 2-20: Nineteen Day Fast
- April 21: First Day of the Ridván Festival that commemorates the declaration of the mission of Baha'u'llah
- May 29: Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh
- October 20: Birth of the Báb
- November 12 Birth of Bahá'u'lláh

## BUDDHISM

Buddhism dates to the Buddha in India, fifth century BCE. The three main branches share core teachings, with diverse thought, scriptures, rituals, and practices.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- A nontheistic religion “right way of living”, that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and practices largely based on teachings attributed to Gautama Buddha.
- Two major extant branches of Buddhism are Theravada and Mahayana.
- Their goal is Nirvana “enlightenment” means the clear realization of the most basic truths about life.
- Means: the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path.
- All life (plant, animal, human) is sacred.
- Cycles of rebirth (reincarnation)
- Ritual for birth, marriage, ordination, health, funerals, memorials.
- Most Buddhists are nonviolent pacifists and vegetarians
- May practice daily meditation or daily rituals.

### Diet

- There is no Buddhist diet but rather a variety of diets according to ethnic/national background and/or level of acculturation to American foods and eating habits.
- Buddhism teaches that a well-balanced, vegetarian diet is extremely healthy for all life stages, including preconception and pregnancy.
- Some Mahayana Buddhists follow strict vegan diets which forbid eating any meat products or derivatives, milk, cheese, and honey.

### Dress/Modesty

- Many Buddhists prefer to wear clothing that reflects their adherence to No-Harm.
- Nude or see-through clothing in public is considered offensive.

### Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Life should be supported during illness
- Buddhist clergy give spiritual care to the dying
- At death, cover the body only with a cotton sheet
- Let body rest as consciousness transitions to new life
- Local Buddhist centers can prepare the body.
- There is no specific time when the deceased should be buried or cremated.
- Memorial services are important in all Buddhist denominations, especially with observances that are tied to ancestor veneration.

### Organ Donation

- Most Buddhists have a positive attitude regarding organ transplantation and donation. Primarily, they believe that the corpse is an empty vessel and that to give of oneself is a great act of compassion.

### Significant Dates

- There is no single Buddhist calendar. Generally, Buddhist observances fall within these categories:
- Events remembering the Buddha.
- Rites related to a specific country or ethnic group.
- Commemorations linked to natural seasons.
- Traditions celebrate the various festivals in multiple ways. Individuals should be asked which festivals are important to them.

### Additional Considerations

- Visits from a Buddhist monk or sister are appreciated as is peace and quiet for meditation and chanting.
- Buddhist tradition condemns abortion and active euthanasia.

## HINDU

Hinduism is among the oldest major faith traditions. With no founder or central authority, it is a family of religions.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- Divinity (Brahman) permeates all things
- Many gods, goddesses, sacred texts, rituals
- Great tolerance for all forms of life
- Hindus believe in re-birth and that one has to face the consequences of their actions in past lives
- There are rituals for many life passages; many festivals
- They may recite scriptures daily, sing hymns, meditate, chant mantras, and make offerings
- Their usual sacred texts are Bhagavad-Gita, and Ramayana
- Some are strict vegetarians (no animal products)
- Most abstain from beef or beef products
- They use small shrines, holy pictures, statues, beads
- Unlike other religions, Hinduism does not have specific priests/officials nor specific organizations governing the affairs of the religious bodies and/or its adherents.

## Diet

- Hindu tradition teaches that all living beings are sacred and inherently deserve respect. Consequently, most Hindus are vegetarians.
- Cows hold a special importance because they remind many of the all-sustaining, Mother Earth. Killing a cow is considered sacrilegious.
- Tradition teaches that foods eaten affect certain thoughts, moods, and behaviors.

## Dress/Modesty

- A married Hindu woman usually wears a necklace which should not be removed. This is the most important sign of Hindu marriage and is worn until the death of the husband.
- High-caste, Hindu men may have a sacred thread tied around the body This should never be removed without permission from a patient or family member.

## Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Modesty, same-gender caregivers for women
- Jewelry may be sacred; should not be removed
- Family is usually with patient
- Medical decisions by patient or surrogate (usually father or eldest son)
- Family's duty not staff to inform the patient of terminal illness
- Patient, family may call Hindu priest (Puja)
- The family prays near patient before, after death
- Death should be peaceful passage to next life
- Body is washed by family, usually cremated
- After the funeral, a widow or widower will wear white as a sign of mourning
- Hindus believe that autopsies may disturb the soul and avoid them. But they comply if necessary by law.

## Organ Donation

- Organ donation is usually acceptable.

## Significant Dates

- As Hinduism is a diverse religion, not all Hindus celebrate the same festivals.
- March: Holi marks the end of winter
- Late October/early November: Baisakhi, the Hindu Solar New Year Day -
- August: Janmashtami, the birthday of Lord Krishna
- September/October: Dussehra/Durga Puja
- Late October/ early November: Diwali

## Other Considerations

- Hindu patients are likely to want to practice their religion in hospital
- Hindus place great importance on cleanliness. Showers are preferred to baths.
- Female Hindus prefer to be examined by a female doctor, although medical care takes priority in an emergency.

## ISLAM

Founded by Muhammad in 600s Arabia, Islam means submission to Allah. A Muslim is one who submits.

## Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- Allah is the only God, creator of universe
- Muhammad is God's prophet
- Their sacred text is the Qur'an
- An adherent of Islam is called a Muslim
- The denomination in Islam are Sunni 70-90% and Shia constitute 10-20% of Islam
- Friday is considered a weekly holy day
- There is fasting during the month of Ramadan
- They pray five times a day facing Mecca (northeast)
- To pray they stand, bow, kneel head to floor without interruption and they use prayer rugs
- They perform ablutions. Ritual cleansings (for prayers, and meals)

## Diet

- They do not consume pork, alcohol, or their by-products
- They usually maintain a kosher or vegetarian diet.
- Although Muslims do not have separate sets of dishes for different foods, they cannot use a dish or utensil that has been used to serve pork.
- When serving food or drinks to a Muslim patient, allow them to receive the food with the right hand. Muslims consider the left hand to be unclean.
- Hand washing before and after meals is very important to Muslims. Washing facilities should be made available to bedridden patients at meal times.
- Fasting is a common religious practice for Muslims.
- All adult Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset every day during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is acceptable for those who are ill or traveling to defer fasting and make up for it later.

### Dress/Modesty

- Islam prescribes a lifestyle of modesty for both men and women. Muslims do not expose their bodies.
- A woman is required to be covered from head to ankles.
- Only a woman's face, hands, and feet may be exposed.
- Women wear loose fitting clothing and a head covering called a hijab.

### Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Modesty, they preferred same gender caregivers
- Illness relaxes religious obligation
- If conflict with treatment, consult family or Muslim clergy (Iman)
- Fellow Muslim or Iman may visit to pray
- The patient's name is not said in prayer
- Death is the transition to eternity
- Muslim patient may sit or lie facing Mecca (northeast)
- Family may recite from Qur'an
- Family decides removal of life support
- The entire body should be covered
- Islamic funeral director prepares and removes body
- Autopsy or cremation are not permitted.

### Organ donation/Blood Transfusion

- There are different beliefs within the Islamic faith on whether organ donation is acceptable.

### Significant Dates

- Ramadan: Ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar
- Eid Al-Fitr: 3-day period to mark the end of Ramadan
- Eid al-Adha: 3-day festival 2 months and 10 days after Eid Al-Fitr
- Al-Hijra: New Year

### Other Considerations

- Muslims are required to pray 5 times a day – dawn, midday, late afternoon, after sunset, and late evening - facing Mecca (i.e., northeast).
- Friday midday prayers are particularly important and must be done in congregation
- Washing in free-flowing water is essential prior to eating, saying prayers, and after visiting the toilet.
- Single sex wards or a single room are preferred and appreciated.

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

This religion began in the late 1900s U.S. as a Bible study movement and was later organized into a single religious unit. Authority resides in the Watchtower Tract and Bible Society.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- Jehovah is the only true God
- Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God
- Everlasting life by the sacrifice of Jesus' perfect human life
- Resurrection to earthly paradise or to Heaven
- Annual Memorial of Christ's death (on Passover)
- They celebrate other sacred occasions: baptism and weddings
- They have services several times a week; Bible study
- They actively share their faith and they are pacifists
- No Christian holidays, images, or symbols

### Diet

- Jehovah's Witnesses may be opposed to eating foods that have blood as an additive, such as lunch meats and certain types of sausage.
- Consumption of animals that have been strangled is prohibited.

### Dress/Modesty

- There are no specific requirements.

### Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Some treatments allowed to reduce blood loss in surgery
- Most Jehovah's Witnesses carry an advance Medical Directive/Release
- Autopsy is permitted

### Blood Products/Organ Donation

- No blood or blood products can be received by transfusion or in medications or foods.
- Organ donation is a personal choice.
- Blood samples may be taken for pathological testing as long as any unused blood is disposed of.
- Most Jehovah's Witnesses carry an Advance Medical Directive/Release that directs staff not to use blood or blood products. Some may also carry Health Care Advance Directive forms that outline their personal treatment choices regarding blood.

## Significant Dates

- For Jehovah's Witnesses, the only day set aside for religious observance is Passover, the memorial of Jesus Christ's death.
- Weddings and anniversaries are celebrated.
- Jehovah's Witnesses do not observe national holidays because they believe that these customs come from ancient false religions.
- Members discovered celebrating pagan holidays, like Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Independence Day, may be excommunicated.
- Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays because they are considered a glorification of the individual rather than the Creator.

## Other Considerations

- Euthanasia and elective abortions are forbidden.
- Jehovah's Witnesses have a hospital liaison committee network that collaborates with the patient and medical staff.

## JUDAISM

Judaism dates 3,500 years to the time of Abraham and Moses. Main branches: Orthodox, Hasidic, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- They believe in One God, creator of the Universe.
- They follow the Ten Commandments
- The Jewish Bible (Tanakh) comprises the Torah, Prophets and historic writings.
- Sabbath: weekly day of rest and worship is from Friday sunset to Saturday at dark
- Sabbath and holidays: from sunset to dark on next day(s) of the Lunar calendar.
- They use a prayer book (siddur), head covering (yarmulkeh or Kipah), Tallit Prayer shawl with tassels/fringes (tzitzit), and 2 Sabbath candles (may be electric).

### 5 Movements of Judaism:

- Orthodox: High level of Adherence to Jewish scriptures and Orthodox Rabbis.
- Hassidic: Similar to Orthodox yet with the infusion of joyful singing to worship.
- Conservative: While committed to sacred Jewish practices responds to social change.
- Reconstructionist: Views Judaism as an evolving religion in ideology and practice.
- Reform: Seeks to employ both Biblical tradition and modern rabbinic writing, of Judaism believing that no particular principle of faith is binding.

## Diet

- Kosher food (i.e., in accord with Kashrut ) is usually the diet of observant Jews.
- Kosher certification assures that the food was prepared according to Jewish dietary laws. Prohibited foods include pork, and its byproducts, shell fish, and crustaceans.
- On most kosher foods, a classification indicates
  - > Fleishik (i.e., meat)
  - > Milchik (i.e., dairy)
  - > Pareve (i.e., neutral)

## Dress/Modesty

- Modesty is important to traditional Jewish women. Sleeves are worn past the elbows. Hems are worn below the knee. Orthodox women often cover their hair in public.
- Most Orthodox men wear head coverings at all times. Others may cover the head at certain times, including while in synagogue, praying, studying the scriptures, and at meal times.

## Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Patients excused from fasting
- Prayers for healing of spirit and body
- Hastening death not permitted; near death, some patients opt to deny extraordinary life support
- At death, close eyes; extend arms and fingers along body
- Family may request all body fluids (including all linens) be kept with body
- Burial of the deceased is desired within 24 hours of death.
- Jewish tradition opposes autopsies with some exceptions.

## Organ Donation

- Organ donation and transplants are acceptable.

## Significant Dates

- Shabbath/Shabbat: Weekly day of rest
- Passover: 2 sets of 2 days in March/April
- Shavuot: (Pentecost) 2 days in May/June
- Rosh Hashanah: Jewish New Year/Day of Remembrance in September/October.
- Sukkot (i.e., Tabernacle/Festival of the Booths): 2 sets of 2 days in September/October

### Other Considerations

- Orthodox Jews prefer medical attention from staff of their own gender.
- Orthodox Jews may wish to observe the Sabbath (i.e., one hour before dusk on Friday to nightfall on Saturday).
- On Sabbath, the use of electric equipment (e.g., automatic door openers, etc.) is precluded. Discuss with patient and/or family.
- If a Rabbi is called, it should be ascertained with which movement of Judaism the patient identifies.
- Most Jewish patients are not likely to expect any particular considerations other than dietary ones.

## THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS OR MORMON

Officially the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), this church was founded in the 1830s U.S.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- God is creator
- Christ is God's divine, first-born son
- Revelations to Mormon, other prophets
- Sacred texts: Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price
- Sacraments: baptism, Lord's Supper, anointing

### Diet

- The Word of Wisdom, a supplemental text of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, gives dietary guidelines that promote healthy living.
- Alcohol, tobacco, hot beverages (i.e., coffee and tea, regardless of temperature, but not cocoa, and illicit drugs are to be avoided.
- It is disputed whether caffeinated soft drinks are also prohibited.
- Fasting for at least two consecutive meals on the first Sunday of each month is required of individual followers except when they are ill. This is known as Sunday Fast.

### Dress/Modesty

- Mormons wear temple garments that usually are white.
- Undergarments (i.e., temple garments) are worn by all adherent adult LDS who have undergone a temple endowment ceremony. They are worn as a symbolic reminder of the teachings and covenants made with God.

### Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Patient may request sacraments.
- Mormon Clergy needed for blessing, Lord's Supper.
- Respect sacred undergarments, if worn by patient.
- Removal of life support decided by patient, family.
- Funeral service, burial of body in grave.
- Resurrection of dead reunites soul with body.
- Autopsy is acceptable.

### Organ donation/Blood Transfusion

- Organ donation and transplant are acceptable.

### Significant Dates

- Christmas – December 25, the celebration of Jesus' birth
- Easter - Celebration of the death, resurrection, and eventual ascension of Jesus to Heaven. Generally, Easter is considered the most important Christian holiday since it is because of Christ's resurrection that Christians can be forgiven of their sins and have everlasting life.

## ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN

The Orthodox Church traces itself to Christ and is one of Christianity's main branches. It maintains the same faith among separate churches (Greek, Russian, Serbian, and others), each under its own patriarch.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- One, triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
- Salvation and eternal life by acceptance of Jesus Christ, God's atoning, sacrifice on a cross for sin.
- Human life is sacred, conception to natural death; the body is respected.
- There is an intense focus on sacraments (mysteries): Baptism, confession of sins, Eucharist (Communion), unction (act of anointing as a rite of healing), and others.
- Orthodox priest needed for all sacraments.
- Use sacred pictures (icons), knotted prayer ropes

### Diet

- No meat and dairy are eaten on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the season of Lent.

### **Sickness, Dying, and Death**

- Excused from fasting during hospital stay and recovery.
- Communion before all surgeries.
- Unction only after confession and Communion.
- When critical or sudden death, call the priest first.
- Orthodox priest must say prayers over the dying.
- Unction for patients especially near death.
- Family may be present before, after death.
- Euthanasia and cremation are not permitted.
- Autopsy is acceptable.

### **Organ Donation**

- Organ donation and transplant are acceptable.

### **Significant Dates**

- Christmas – December 25, the celebration of Jesus' birth
- Easter – Celebration of the death, resurrection, and eventual ascension of Jesus to Heaven. Generally, Easter is considered the most important Christian holiday since it is because of Christ's resurrection that Christians can be forgiven of their sins and have everlasting life.
- Lent - the forty days before Easter; also referred to as the Lenten Season

## **PROTESTANT, NONDENOMINATIONAL, AND INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN**

Protestantism, a main branch of Christianity, began as a 16th century European movement from Catholicism. Today Protestant, Nondenominational, and Independent Christian churches include AME, Anglican/Episcopal, Apostolic, Baptist, Charismatic, Church of God, Church of God in Christ, Evangelical, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and many others.

### **Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices**

- God is Triune as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Salvation and eternal life by acceptance of Jesus Christ, God's atoning, sacrifice on a cross for sin.
- Life is sacred; body is respected
- Central text: Bible
- Sacraments are baptism, communion, many practice anointing.
- Weekly worship expected, usually Sundays
- Devotional items: Bible reading and prayer, with varying days of fasting

### **Diet**

- Dietary limits are personal choices influenced by traditions of faith.

### **Dress/Modesty**

- There are no specific requirements

### **Sickness, Dying, and Death:**

- Ministers, pastors may visit for counsel and prayers
- Some churches anoint the sick; few have last rites for dying
- Most advocate reconciling with family, friends, God
- All hold life as God's gift to be honored and sustained
- Patient with family may decide on extreme, prolonged life support measures.

## **ROMAN CATHOLIC**

The largest church tracing itself to Christ, Roman Catholicism is a main branch of Christianity and united under the pope in Rome.

### **Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices**

- One, triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
- Salvation and eternal life by acceptance of Jesus Christ, God's atoning, sacrifice on the cross for sin.
- Human life is sacred, conception to natural death; body is respected
- The seven sacraments are vital: baptism, confession of sins (penance, reconciliation), Eucharist (Communion), sacrament of the sick, and others.
- Mass required Sundays, solemn holy days.
- Use crucifix, rosary beads, holy water, scapulas, and medals. And icons or statuary

### **Diet**

- Some Catholics do not eat meat or drink alcohol on Fridays and on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.
- They will eat fish or vegetarian as an option

### **Dress/Modesty**

- There are no specific requirements

### **Sickness, Dying, and Death**

- Exempt from fasting during hospital stay.
- Only the patient can request Confession, Communion and the Sacrament of the Sick (In a traumatic situation the Sacrament of the Sick maybe given if requested by the family).

- Catholic priest or Lay Eucharistic Minister brings Communion.
- Need Catholic priest for confession, sacrament of the sick.
- Sacrament of the sick only once in hospital (for serious reason).
- Ask dying patients what they want.
- Must preserve life by ordinary means.
- Patient can deny extraordinary means.
- Patient should be alive and lucid for sacrament of the sick (unless emergency).
- Autopsy and cremation are options.

### Organ Donation

- Organ donation and transplant are options.

### Significant Dates

- Christmas - December 25, the celebration of Jesus' birth
- Easter - Celebration of the death, resurrection, and eventual ascension of Jesus to Heaven. Generally, Easter is considered the most important Christian holiday since it is because of Christ's resurrection that Christians can be forgiven of their sins and have everlasting life.
- Lent - the forty days prior to Easter during which Catholics give up indulgences as a symbol of devotion and repentance
- Palm Sunday - the Sunday before Easter; It commemorates Jesus' return to Jerusalem before his crucifixion.
- Good Friday - the Friday before Easter that commemorates the day Christ was crucified and buried.

## SIKHISM

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak in 1496 in North India.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices:

- One supreme, infinite God.
- Salvation by spiritual union with God.
- Reincarnation of immortal soul.
- Sacred text: Guru Granth Sahib.
- Recite five prayers a day, no interruption.
- Constant remembrance of God.
- No tobacco, alcohol, intoxicants, cutting hair.

### Diet

- Meat eating is not prohibited except for beef.
- Many Sikhs, especially women, are vegetarian and do not eat eggs or fish.
- Sikhs do not eat halal meat.

### Dress/Modesty

- Practicing males observe the 5 religious symbols (i.e., k's) of their faith. If any of these items need to be removed, ask for permission from the patient and family.
- Kesh- Uncut hair (i.e., symbol of dedication)
- Kangha - Wooden comb (i.e., symbol of cleanliness and discipline)
- Kara - Steel bracelet (i.e., symbol of restraint of action and constant remembrance of God)
- Kachha - Knee length underpants (i.e., symbol of self-control and chastity)
- Kirpan - Ceremonial sword (i.e., symbol of dignity and the struggle against injustice; worn as part of religious dress. not a weapon).
- Most Sikh men and some women wear turbans.
- Female Sikhs prefer to be nursed by females and have their modesty protected at all times.

### Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Same-gender caregivers for women.
- Modesty, privacy important.
- Family recites Sikh scriptures at bedside.
- Call local Gurdwaras (place of worship) for Sikh leader.
- Funeral director removes body; usually cremated.
- Autopsy is acceptable.

### Organ Donation

- Organ donation and transplant are acceptable.

### Significant Dates

- Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh - January 5
- Vaisakhi - April 14
- Martyrdom of Furu Arjan Dev - June 16
- Sri Guru Granth Sahib Day - September 1
- Divali (Diwali) - October/November (i.e., date set by lunar calendar)
- Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur - November 24
- Birthday of Guru Nanak - November

## Other Considerations

- Showers are preferred to baths.
- If a bedpan is used, a bowl of water should be offered.
- Turban/breeches should not be removed during life.

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

This liberal religion includes many religious traditions. It is a consolidation of several Universalist and Unitarian churches.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices

- Beliefs, rituals, practices chosen by the individual person.
- Overall spiritual aims of this religion are expressed in seven principles.
- Based on covenants within and between congregations.
- Membership in a congregation not required.
- Some follow personal dietary requirements.

### Diet

- There are no specific dietary needs

### Dress/Modesty

- There are no specific requirements

### Sickness, Dying, and Death

- Hymnal "Singing the Living Tradition" used for hospital patients.
- Patient may want to discuss spiritual concerns with a Unitarian Universalist minister.
- No clergy required for any practices.
- Privacy, caregiver gender is patient's preference.
- Autopsy, burial and cremation are based on patient's belief.

### Organ Donation

- Organ donations and transplants are based on patient beliefs.

## WICCA

Wicca is an ancient nature religion. It is not institutional, has no central authority, and is very diverse.

### Beliefs, Rituals, and Practices:

- Belief in a single deity or many gods and goddesses (nature, human aspirations)
- Great reverence for the earth
- Meet in private covens; rituals tied to life events
- Each coven has its own rituals (its Book of Shadows)

### Diet

- In line with the notion of harm none, many choose a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle.

### Dress/Modesty

- There are no specific requirements.

### Sickness, Dying, and Death:

- Patients follow rituals of their own coven
- Notify patient's own coven priest
- Beliefs about the afterlife vary
- Autopsy is acceptable.

### Organ Donation

- Organ donations and transplants are acceptable.

### **UPMC Center for Engagement and Inclusion**

The mission of UPMC's Center for Engagement and Inclusion is to ensure that inclusion is at the core of what we do every day at UPMC. Inclusion begins with a core belief that everyone deserves dignity and respect. Inclusion is built by accepting others through understanding and honoring differences.

Promoting inclusion in patient and family care involves cultural competency. The heart of cultural competency is understanding differences — of generation, physical ability, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, religion, social and economic background, and even ideas. Understanding differences leads to acceptance of others and opportunity for all.

This Interfaith Pocket Brochure is part of the UPMC Center for Engagement and Inclusion Cultural Competency Toolkit.

### **UPMC Office of Spiritual Care**

The Office of Spiritual Care offers spiritual support to patients, families, and staff. As part of the health care team, we are committed to the care of the whole person. As chaplains, we endeavor to identify the spiritual and emotional needs of all who desire our services. We provide healthy and meaningful care that connects with the person's spirituality. Call us at **412-647-7560**.

For more information, visit <http://inclusion.infonet.upmc.com>, contact the UPMC Center for Engagement and Inclusion at [Engagement@upmc.edu](mailto:Engagement@upmc.edu) or by phone at **412-864-5633**.

UPMC policy prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, genetics, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, familial status, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected group status. Further, UPMC will continue to support and promote equal employment opportunity, human dignity, and racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in UPMC programs and activities. This commitment is made by UPMC in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.