Requests for religious accommodations: principles for decision-making

- Honor dictates of the religion
- Patient care takes precedence
- Determine reasonableness of the request, in part by asking the following questions regarding the requested accommodation:
  - Will it interfere with patient care?
  - Will it interfere with resident/student education?
  - Will it have an impact on others, such as residents, students or faculty?
  - Is there a possibility to arrange cross-coverage? If so, encourage resident-to-resident negotiation to accomplish coverage.
  - What is the amount of time away?
  - Do others of the same religion obtain similar accommodations, particularly physicians?
  - What is the recommendation of the religious clergy/adviser? Offer to speak directly to the resident’s clergy to better understand the expectations and inquire what other residents or physicians do in similar situations. In particular, discuss religious observance and responsibilities related to patient care.