Religion is a significant aspect of human experience that can provide a framework for an individual’s response to a health challenge or transition. Individual religious beliefs, or those of a patient’s family or community, may influence health care decisions and provide a means for coping. This book provides accessible and comprehensive information about various religions, offering nurses insight into their patients’ religious beliefs and practices and thereby enhancing therapeutic care.

The centerpiece of this book is the compilation of information about diverse religions written by highly knowledgeable religionists. The reference includes information, formatted concisely and consistently, on a religion’s history and theology; views on health and suffering; explanations for disease; beliefs and practices related to birthing, childrearing, and dying; healing rituals; corporate religious resources for the sick; and more. Prefacing this information are chapters discussing clinical aspects of addressing religion at the bedside. These include strategies for sensitive and respectful communication about religion with patients, assessing a patient’s religious beliefs, supporting bedside rituals that are part of a patient’s religion, and understanding ethical and legal considerations. The book also provides a comprehensive list of additional resources.