



Provincialate : 4A Chestnut Drive, Singapore 679330. Tel: 67602461 website: [www.chij-sisters.org](http://www.chij-sisters.org)

## **Our Journey with Our Lay Partners**

### **A Partnership Rooted in Esteem and Respect Since 1854**

Since the Infant Jesus (IJ) Sisters arrived in Singapore in 1854, they have cultivated a profound partnership with the laity. This collaboration, built on mutual respect and a shared mission, has flourished for over a century. From the very beginning, lay partners have been pivotal in advancing the IJ mission, particularly in the realms of education and care for the most vulnerable.

In those early years, lay persons joined forces with the Sisters to offer education to young girls from diverse backgrounds and faiths. They also played a crucial role in caring for abandoned children, driven by poverty, superstition, and lack of medical care. These lay partners, often women of deep faith, were drawn to the mission by the courage and compassion of the Sisters. Inspired by the values and attitudes exemplified by the Sisters, they adopted these qualities in their shared ministry, creating a legacy of care and dedication that continues to inspire.

### **Embracing a New Vision Post-World War II**

The partnership with the laity evolved significantly in the post-World War II era, shaped by the call of the Church through Vatican II and the IJ General and Provincial Chapters from 1971. The social changes of the last 50 years have further refined this collaboration, emphasising the importance of "growth together."

"Together" is the operative word. Sisters and lay partners have embarked on a joint journey to encounter Christ at a deeper level, fostering a transformation in how they perceive the world and those they serve. This shared journey draws strength from the life and actions of Jesus, as revealed in the Gospels, forming the foundation for their collaborative ministry. This vision of mutual growth and transformation is more relevant than ever, inspiring both current and future generations to look upon the world with compassion and hope.

### **Deepening Lay Partnership in Education and Care**

As leadership roles in the 11 CHIJ schools and IJ Homes and Children's Centres transitioned to capable lay leaders, the need to deepen their understanding of IJ spirituality became evident. The ethos of a CHIJ school, deeply rooted in IJ spirituality, calls for lay leaders to integrate this spiritual thrust, becoming a transformative influence within their communities.

Lay leaders in IJ institutions understand the profound impact of an IJ education and work alongside the Sisters to preserve the distinctive education envisioned by the Founder and early Sisters. Efforts to revitalise the IJ mission and the meaning and ethos of what we stand for have been undertaken to inspire the younger generation, ensuring that the symbols of our crest and motto continue to resonate and guide.

The journey of working together is ongoing. It requires a continuous search for ways to engage school leadership in their own spiritual transformation, enabling them to influence their school communities positively. Together, Sisters and lay partners respond to the quest for meaning and purpose among staff and students, providing a moral compass to guide them through the challenges of the future.



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## Our IJ Partners in Mission

The partnership with lay persons encompasses various roles, including:

- Boards of Management (BOM) of CHIJ schools and IJHCC: Offering governance and strategic direction and ensuring the IJ mission is lived.
- Principals, Vice Principals: Leading and educating in alignment with IJ mission and values.
- Teachers: translating the values and mission to lived experience for each pupil. The respect for the dignity of each person is upheld. The aim is to help pupils to work collaboratively with others for the common good. Education for transformation is the objective.
- Support Staff and Education Assistants (EAS): Ensuring the smooth operation of IJ institutions according to the mission of the institutions
- Ambassadors and Alumni: Promoting the IJ mission and values in wider communities.
- Friends and Benefactors: Providing time, voluntary services and financial and material support to sustain and expand the mission.
- Seekers and Mission Partners: Joining the mission locally and overseas, participating in spiritual growth, and engaging in prayer.

## Alumni: Continuing to Impact Society

An IJ education instills values that extend far beyond the classroom. Our alumni, having imbibed these values as students, continue to make a significant impact on society. They carry forward the spirit of service, compassion, and leadership learned during their time with us, applying these principles in their personal and professional lives. These former students, now leaders in various fields, exemplify the transformative power of an IJ education, inspiring others through their dedication to making a positive difference in the Church and society.

## Embracing Missionary Discipleship

Many lay partners have also responded to God's call to be missionary disciples. They live the Gospel through the IJ Charism and Spirituality in their personal and professional lives, embodying the values and mission of the IJ Sisters.

## A Call to the Future

The journey of the IJ Sisters with their lay partners is a testament to the enduring power of collaboration rooted in shared faith and values. From the early days of education and care to the contemporary challenges of today, this partnership has continually evolved, always responding to the needs of the times while staying true to the mission.

# Infant Jesus Sisters, Singapore (founded in France, 1662, established in Singapore 1854)



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As we look to the future, the legacy of the IJ Sisters and their lay partners serves as a beacon of inspiration, calling all of us to strive for a transformative impact on the lives we touch. Together, guided by the enduring spirit of our mission, it is our hope that we can continue to create a world where compassion, hope, and faith lead the way.



Some members of the IJBOM



Members of the Management Committee of IJHCC



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Some IJ Ambassadors



Participants at the Learning Journey at CHIJMES

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Some iJ Alumni leaders



IJ Associates with Sr Brigitte and Sr Jane



IJ Aspiring Collaborators



IJ Collaborators