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THE IJ AMBASSADORS' PROGRAMME

Celebrating a Decade of Faithful Witness: 10th Anniversary of the CHIJ Ambassadors Programme

With deep gratitude and joy, the Infant Jesus family in Singapore celebrates a significant milestone—the 10th Anniversary of the CHIJ Ambassadors Programme. This journey stands as a testimony to the enduring spirit of Blessed Nicolas Barré and Mother Mathilde Raclot, whose vision of holistic education rooted in faith continues to inspire generations across our eleven CHIJ schools.

The seeds of this initiative were sown on 4 August 2015, when the late Sister Deirdre O’Loan, IJ, then School Supervisor of CHIJ Schools, shared with school leaders that the distinctive character of every CHIJ school must remain anchored in the founder’s vision. She reminded school communities that fidelity to the spirit of Blessed Nicolas Barré requires constant renewal. Recognising the importance to strengthen the IJ identity among educators, she garnered Sister Maria Lau and Ms Magdalene Chin, a long-serving CHIJ educator to develop the initial concept paper that gave birth to the CHIJ Ambassadors Programme.

Each CHIJ school was invited to identify a few ex-CHIJ students (currently teachers), who demonstrated a deep love for the IJ mission. These ambassadors would embody IJ values in their daily lives and ensure the continuity of the IJ heritage. The first group of CHIJ Ambassadors met on 27 August 2015, and what began as a small seed of hope has since flourished into a vibrant network of committed lay educators.

The programme’s objectives are twofold: to preserve and strengthen the IJ heritage and identity as envisioned by Blessed Nicolas Barré, and to align the culture and practices of CHIJ schools with the ideals of the IJ educational mission—Christ-centred, holistic and responsive to the needs of today’s world.

The role of each CHIJ Ambassador is both spiritual and practical. They are called to deepen



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their understanding of IJ spirituality and live it out daily, to be visible witnesses of the IJ charism within their school communities, to accompany others in discovering the heart of the IJ mission, and to support school leaders in aligning practices with the ideals of an IJ education.

A distinctive hallmark of the programme is its strong emphasis on ongoing formation and spiritual deepening. Ambassadors are given sessions to understand and interiorise the IJ spirituality, marked by trust in Divine Providence, disinterestedness and abandonment to the love of God.

The ambassadors developed shared resources on IJ heritage drawn from different CHIJ schools. This helped build a common understanding of the IJ identity and laid a strong foundation for future formation. Mission encounters—including visits to CHIJ schools, learning journeys to CHIJMES and the IJ Village, and reflections on Barré’s pedagogy of love—have continued to root ambassadors in a spirituality.

On 19 September 2025, the CHIJ family gathered in thanksgiving to mark this ten-year journey. Past and present ambassadors came together for a para liturgy, a joyful walk down memory lane, and a high tea hosted by the IJ Sisters. Ms Magdalene Chin shared a reflection entitled “My Thoughts, Wishes and Dreams for the IJ Ambassadors”, reminding all that the mission continues through faith, collaboration and love.

Today, the baton of coordination has been passed to the Director of Mission and Formation, who continues this meaningful work with fidelity and dedication, ensuring the programme grows in depth and relevance.

As the ambassadors look to the future, they remain steadfast in their call to be bearers of the IJ spirit, and through their fidelity, passion and joy, they echo the timeless truth:

“The work is God’s. He alone can bless and make it fruitful. It will endure as long as He wills it.” — Blessed Nicolas Barré

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



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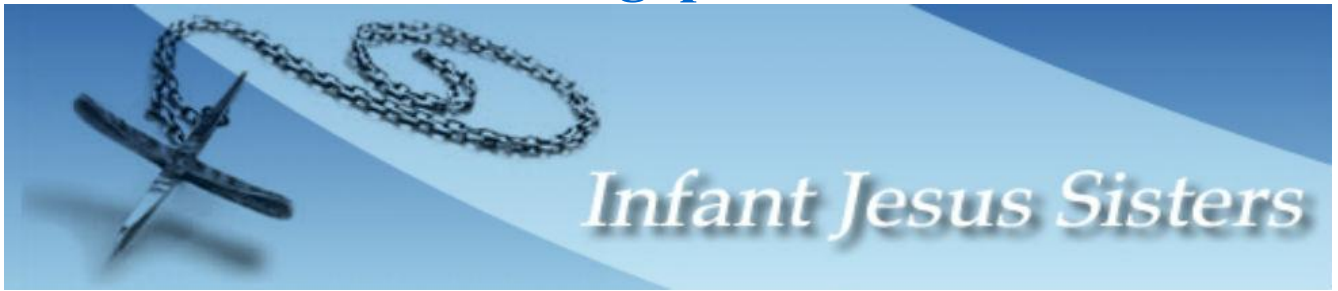
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10th Anniversary Celebration of IJ Ambassadors Programme.



Ambassadors from CHIJ Katong Primary School.



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Ambassadors from CHIJ St Joseph’s Convent (Secondary School)

How it started

CHIJ launched an IJ Ambassadors' Programme in August 2015 with these objectives:

- To preserve the heritage and legacy of the IJ identity in CHIJ schools as defined by the founder’s original initiatives and intent, enriched by the legacy of Rev Mother Mathilde
- To align culture-building practices and policies in CHIJ schools to the ideals of an IJ educational experience while making it relevant in the current context
- To assist the future leadership of the CHIJ schools in their efforts to be faithful to the IJ guiding spirit

The culture of the CHIJ schools is defined by the following components that reflect the intent, history, meaning, values and symbols that undergird our way of life/being in CHIJ.

Original Initiative and Intent	The CHIJ Mission and Story in Singapore	The CHIJ Story (International)	Meanings, Values and Symbols of CHIJ Schools
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The IJ Dream of Blessed Nicolas Barre is a vision that centres around the child's worth and potential, the transformative power of education and formation, holistic personal development rooted in love, and the creation of a caring and inclusive community under the guidance of faith and God's Providence, with a special focus on the welfare of the least advantaged.

The Essential Components of the IJ Dream

- Child-centred education
- Service and cultivation
- Inclusivity and acceptance
- Freedom and openness
- Parental engagement
- Professional integrity
- Gentleness and patience
- Contemplation of God and the Incarnation
- Transformation through education
- Legacy and compassion

The Manifestation of the IJ Dream is through **the characteristics** of CHIJ Schools

The CHIJ School is

- a Catholic school which commits itself to the proclamation and the living out of the gospel in every facet of its life
- a school where the poor and the weakest in society are given priority, where choices and decisions are made from the viewpoint of the disadvantaged
- a community of persons with Christ as its leader, where the dignity, worth, talents of each person are respected and developed and where each is encouraged to become a person for others
- committed to the total development of the person in her God-given uniqueness
- a school where all work together for the promotion of truth, justice, freedom and love
- a school that works for a just society and in the management of its affairs as seen to be just

trust in God, with a readiness to reach out to others, motivated by Christ-like love, simplicity, gentleness, courage, compassion, concern for the poor, are the outstanding characteristics of a CHIJ school community.



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IJ Ambassadors

CHIJ Schools	Founding Year
CHIJ Primary (Toa Payoh)	1854
CHIJ Secondary (Toa Payoh)	1854
CHIJ St Theresa's Convent	1933
CHIJ Katong Convent (Sec)	1930
CHIJ Katong Primary	1930/ 1959 (Op Es)
CHIJ St Joseph's Convent	1938
CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School (Pri)	1933
CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School (Sec)	1933
CHIJ OLQP	1955
CHIJ OLN	1957
CHIJ OLGC	1960
CHIJ Kellock	1964/ 1936 (Ophir)
Old Girls	

Presenting our present IJ Ambassadors





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There are 4 meetings per year including 2 school visits.

Meetings in 2025

(17 Jan, 11 Apr (School visit), 29 Aug (School visit), 19 Sep Zoom mtg)

Role of the IJ ambassador

To assist the current and future leadership of the CHIJ schools in their efforts to be faithful to the IJ guiding spirit,

the IJ Ambassador would need to....

- Familiarise self with ‘knowledge’ of the components of Culture---Building grounded in spirituality
- Live out the IJ spirituality in their role as ambassador and educator
- Codify (including transmit/ communicate) the ‘knowledge’ to members of the school community through explicit and intentional teaching and/or communication of the IJ inspiration which drives practice
- Guide relevant personnel (e.g. School Staff Developer) on the requirements of the IJ Culture---Building components
- Assist school leaders in aligning/ developing/ enhancing school practices to the desired ideals of the CHIJ educational experience

Understanding IJ spirituality Sessions from 2015			
<p>Capturing the Spirit of our Foundation: Nicolas Barre</p>	<p>Mission Awareness: IJ Spirituality as defined by the incarnation – LOVE</p>	<p>Mission Awareness: Nicolas Barre’s Trust in Divine Providence Being guided by the pure love of God The practice of disinterestedness Abandoning one to God’s love</p>	<p>Mission Awareness and Encounter: Nicolas Barre’s Pedagogy totally centred on love for each individual person; all being accepted in their uniqueness, while recognising their circumstances and their potential</p>



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<p>Capturing the Pioneering Spirit: Mother Mathilde</p>	<p>Mission Encounter: Encountering God and translating the encounter to a personal response</p>	<p>Mission Encounter Encountering 'Trust in Divine Providence': Learning Journey to CHIJMES IJ Village</p>	
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Mission Awareness & Encounter:

Nicolas Barre’s Pedagogy totally centred on love for each individual person; all being accepted in their uniqueness, while recognising their circumstances and their potential.

Being an CHIJ Ambassador is more than the “doing”. -It is about “US” the IJ Family.... About the being...-“How can we be a living witness, an encounter, an experience of Jesus to others and beyond?”

Year 2023 & 2024

Mission Awareness & Encounter:

Nicolas Barre – his works & his legacy
Mother Mathilde – her zeal & influence in the East

At the meeting on 21 April 2023 at CHIJ Secondary, the Ambassadors were taken on a tour to the school chapel, the school museum, the school hall, the hall of fame and the 170th anniversary project.

The Induction Program

5 April, 12 July, 29 May 2024

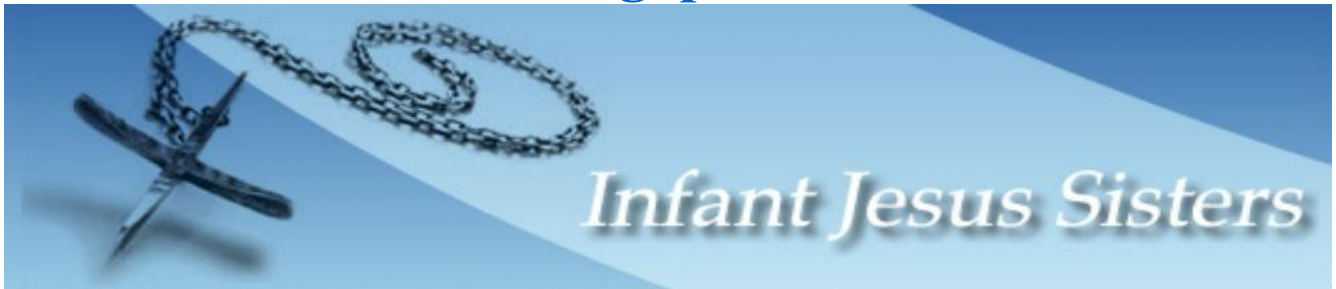
Ambassadors’ meetings

19 Apr, 26 Jul, 20 Sep 2024

All ambassadors are invited to the Growth Session every 3rd Friday of the month from 8-9 pm. to deepen their spirituality.

The session is on Zoom

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What happened In 2015

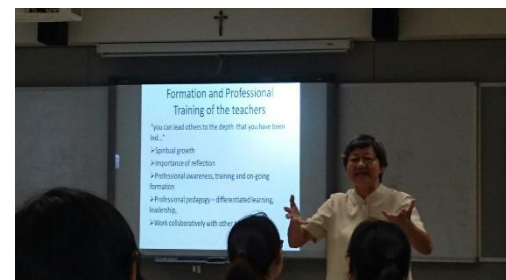
Teachers and past pupils who believe in the IJ education, mission and ideals and have a strong conviction of the need to keep the IJ identity, heritage and legacy alive in the CHIJ school, have asked for a 2 day session on understanding the “IJ Spirituality” and the IJ vision of education as envisioned by the founder.

IJ Ambassadors see themselves willing to live out the IJ Spirituality in their role as ambassadors and educators and contribute to culture-building in their respective school grounded in the IJ Spirituality

Their Commitment

- They attended a 2-day session on “Understanding the IJ Spirituality” in September 2015 facilitated by Sr. Maria, and in 2016, they attended a Day of Recollection and 2 meetings and participated in collaborative networking and sharing of how IJ values / spirituality are lived out and how decisions are being made with that in mind. Again in 2017, they attended 2 meetings and had two sessions to deepen their knowledge of the IJ Spirituality.
- They shared practices from their own CHIJ school and collectively develop collaterals that provide guidance and education to all staff and students in the CHIJ schools
- They reviewed the IJ identity of school versus desired culture and practices and policies that can better reflect IJ ideals and philosophy.
- It is hoped that they will work together to create a repository of codified information for future generations of IJ schools.

The session started with a prayer service on the theme: “God is with us”





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Overview of IJ Ambassadors' Plans from 2015 to 2020

2015 - 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 - 2020
Original Initiative and intent	The CHIJ Mission and story in Singapore	Meanings, Values and Symbols of CHIJ Schools
Blessed Nicolas Barre	Mother Mathilde and CHIJMES	

At the first meeting on 3 May 2016, the IJ Ambassadors from the 11 CHIJ Schools came to share their resources on the founder, Blessed Nicolas Barre, Mother Mathilde and the Programmes for Induction and Founder’s Day with the aim of streamlining collective knowledge and publication of critical pieces of information on our Founder Nicolas Barre, Mother Mathilde ... for future use.

They organised themselves into four project teams.

Team 1	To design learning journey to CHIJMES for Staff induction
Team 2	To prepare the Student Handbook (Pr) with the IJ Narrative (do a 2-page writeup of Mother Mathilde and CHIJ Mission and story in Singapore for 2018 Students' handbook and diary of CHIJ
Team 3	To prepare the Student Handbook (Sec) with the IJ Narrative (do a 2-page writeup of Mother Mathilde and CHIJ Mission and story in Singapore for 2018 Students' handbook and diary of CHIJ
Team 4	To prepare the Founder's Day Programme and Instructional Resources – craft and design suggested theme / programme / activities to commemorate Founder's Day 2017/2018

In 2016 and 2017, there were two sessions on deepening their understanding of the IJ Spirituality, to know why they do what they do and two sessions where the IJ Ambassadors worked together on themed topics.

From 2018, the IJ Ambassadors were introduced to an experience of a Mission Encounter at the IJ Homes and Children Centres where they were introduced to the history and mission of the Centre. Subsequently, they started visiting CHIJ Schools beginning with CHIJ St Nicholas. At CHIJ St Nicholas, the principal and her staff shared a brief history of the school and how the school helps the students and staff to understand, appreciate and experience the IJ Spirituality, its mission and values.

At the end of the sharing, the IJ Ambassadors were taken on a school tour. To date, the IJ Ambassadors had visited CHIJ OLG on 26 April 2019 and CHIJ Katong Primary on 2 August 2019. The scheduled visits to CHIJ Pr and Sec Schools Toa Payoh and CHIJ St Joseph’s Convent had to be postponed because of the COVID-19 Circuit Breaker



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Staff Induction Part II: Learning Journey at CHIJMES

Part II of the CHIJ Staff Induction, the Learning journey to CHIJMES for 2019 was facilitated by the IJ Ambassadors and Old Girls of the following schools

5 Apr CHIJ Induction for Sec Schools – CHIJ Kellock
12 Jul CHIJ Induction for Pri Schools – CHIJ STC
15 & 24 Jul CHIJ Induction for EAS Staff - CHIJ SJC and Old girls

Student Handbook: The Spread of the IJ Mission

Since 2016, the IJ Ambassadors have worked on fine-tuning the contents of important IJ history

found in all IJ schools' Student Handbook/ Planner/ Diary.

2016: write-up on Blessed Nicolas Barre (primary and secondary versions)

2017: write-up on Mother Mathilde (primary and secondary versions)

2018: write-up on the CHIJ Story in Singapore (primary and secondary versions)

Other Project Teams' Work

The projects that were planned for the year yielded pretty good results The ambassadors came together to complete these projects:-

Feedback Form for IJ CHIJMES Learning Journey (as part of staff induction)

Fun facts @ Contact Time (fun facts for IJ schools to use to familiarize staff on the story of CHIJ)

Video recording of CHIJ (can be possibly used for each school's induction, briefing to parents etc...)

IJ for Life Programme for Primary Schools comprising:-

Guidelines for P6 Graduation

Sisterly Love@IJ for P1s

Service@IJ for P3s

IJ for Life Programme for Secondary Schools comprising:-

IJ Friends are Friends for Life for Sec 1s

Reconciliation, Reflection and Renewal for Sec 4s

2020 had been a quiet year because of the lock down. 2021-2022 were also inactive years..

We continue to praise God for his blessings on us all for we know that all the gifts we have and every blessing that we receive come from Him.

(We are grateful to Ms Magdalene Chin, Principal of CHIJ Kellock and her Planning Team and all the IJ Ambassadors from the respective CHIJ Schools for keeping the IJ spirit alive for all IJ staff and students as one IJ community.)



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RESOURCES

Mother Mathilde (1814-1911)

Mother Mathilde Raclot, driven by a profound sense of mission, exemplified unwavering faith, courage, and fortitude. As a trailblazer, she fearlessly pursued her vision of providing education for women in Singapore, Malaya, and Japan.

Despite facing formidable challenges, her deep faith in God and unwavering belief in the dignity of every person, especially girls and the disadvantaged, propelled her forward.

Mother Mathilde's instrumental role in bringing education to girls in Asia contributed significantly to their growth and development, nurturing their God-given talents against all costs.

The Life & Legacy of Mother Mathilde (Discussion)

Mother Mathilde was a woman of faith and fortitude. She was a trailblazer who was galvanized by love and a deep sense of mission. Through the life story of Mother Mathilde, how do we inspire our students to emulate her qualities and her deep faith in God?

The Life & Legacy of Mother Mathilde (Reflection questions for students)

Reflection on Mother Mathilde's Qualities:

- What qualities did Mother Mathilde exhibit throughout her life, especially during challenging moments?
- How did her faith and trust in God play a significant role in shaping her character and guiding her decisions?

Emulating Positive Qualities and Overcoming Challenges:

- How could you demonstrate some of these qualities (such as kindness, resilience, resourcefulness and discipline) into your own life?
- Can you think of situations in your own life where you faced challenges and how you might apply the lessons from Mother Mathilde?

Service to Others and Empathy:

- In what ways can you contribute to your family/school/community or help those who are less fortunate, drawing inspiration from Mother Mathilde's actions?
- In what areas of your life can you strive to leave a positive and lasting impact, similar to Mother Mathilde?

“There can be no peace without a culture of care.

The culture of care thus calls for a common, supportive and inclusive commitment to protecting and promoting the dignity and good of all, a willingness to show care and compassion, to work for reconciliation and healing, and to advance mutual respect and acceptance.



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In many parts of the world, there is a need for paths of peace to heal open wounds. There is also a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter."

**Pope Francis
World Day of Peace 2021**

St Francis' Prayer for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love
For it is in giving that we receive-
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
And it's in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

St Francis' Prayer for Peace (for discussion)

The readiness to reach out to others, motivated by Christ-like love, gentleness, courage, compassion and concern for the poor are the outstanding hallmarks of an IJ school. In a world rife with conflict and misinformation, how can the IJ community be a Channel of Peace?

St Francis' Prayer for Peace (Questions for students)

Being Channels of Peace

- How does the school provide a caring and supportive environment?
- How can young people like us become peacemakers in our schools, communities, and beyond?
- How can the virtues mentioned in the prayer, such as love, pardon, faith, hope, light, and joy, be applied in our interactions with others?
- In what ways can you be an instrument of peace in your everyday life, especially when faced with challenges or conflicts?
- Can you share examples from our own experiences where showing love, understanding, or forgiveness helped in resolving conflicts?