



Newsletter

Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle
Different Races • Many Beliefs • One Nation

A quarterly publication of the
Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle



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2012

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of events

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Foreword



In 2006, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong launched the Community Engagement Programme (CEP) with the key objective of developing strong and deep networks of trust and friendship amongst racial and religious communities. This objective has been achieved through the Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCCs).

The IRCCs have worked hard over the years to build strong relationships amongst leaders of different racial and religious groups. This work is critical, because relationships are at the heart of building trust and understanding, which in turn are essential for maintaining racial and religious harmony. It is also crucial to raise public awareness of the important roles which the IRCCs play, so more can step forward and help in the good work that IRCCs do.

The IRCCs must therefore constantly explore new ways to encourage interaction and communication among the various racial and religious communities in our society to grow these social networks. To enhance their outreach efforts, the IRCCs have started a series of IRCC@Heartlands roadshows since 2010, showcasing the IRCCs' work and the local religious organisations. The IRCC website (www.ircc.sg) was launched in March 2010 to increase public outreach and gather ground feedback.

This newsletter will help augment the IRCC's efforts in reaching out to more people, so that everyone in Singapore can play a part in maintaining racial and religious harmony. It will further allow for a healthy exchange of ideas among members of the various communities. In this inaugural issue, you will find information on what IRCCs do, and learn about activities they have organised that you can participate in. You will also get to understand more about the various racial and religious communities in a fun way, through things we can all take part in, such as making of crafts and foods.

I believe you too would have many ideas to contribute towards maintaining racial and religious harmony. I would encourage you to share these ideas, and any other feedback you may have on the publication with the editorial team. Together, we can develop a fun and interesting newsletter for all.

I would like to thank all IRCC members and our community stakeholders for their dedicated contributions in promoting racial and religious harmony in Singapore. Let us continue to work together hand in hand to realise the IRCC vision – to be networks of trust that unite people regardless of race or religion.

Lawrence Wong

Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth
Chairman for National Steering Committee on Racial and Religious Harmony

Do you know about CEP and IRCC?



Community Engagement Programme (CEP)

- Launched in 9 February 2006 by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong
- Aims to bring Singaporeans from diverse backgrounds together to help to develop inter-community understanding and to develop social resilience
- The various agencies in the CEP work with their respective clusters to ensure Singapore is crisis-resilient

Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle (IRCC)

- Local-level inter-faith platforms in every constituency, formed to promote racial and religious harmony
- Supports the CEP and instrumental to strengthening our social cohesion
- Important bridges between religious, ethnic and community groups at the local level; leaders from these groups come together to join the IRCC networks to build friendships and trust
- Aims to deepen people's understanding of the various faiths and beliefs through inter-faith and inter-ethnic themed activities such as inter-faith heritage trails
- Primed to respond quickly to incidents with racial and religious tensions and to project solidarity on the ground during crisis

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National IRCC Seminar 2012

In celebration of the IRCCs' achievements over the past decade, Mr Chan Chun Sing, then Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, launched an exhibition titled "The IRCC Journey 2002 – 2012" at the National IRCC Seminar held at Singapore Expo Max Atria on 13 October 2012. The interactive exhibition featured significant milestones and highlights of the IRCCs over the past ten years, including a multi-touch screen display of photos, newspaper articles and videos of the efforts of the IRCCs.

Guest speakers shared experiences on crisis management and the role of information management, as well as the appropriate approaches to social media use.

Further group discussions saw participants sharing and exchanging ideas and proposals on youth engagements, as well as using social media to promote racial harmony and social cohesion. The event ended with a dialogue session chaired by Acting Minister, together with panel members of the National Steering Committee for Racial and Religious Harmony.



IRCC Calendar of Events (Jan to Mar 2013)

Event	Date	Time	Venue	Organised by
IRCC Family Day 2013	19 Jan 2013	9.30am to 2pm	Jurong Bird Park	MCCY
Youth Interfaith Exchange- Connexion	26 Jan 2013	9am to 3pm	La Salle College of the Arts	Mountbatten, Jalan Besar, Jalan Kayu IRCCs
Marsiling IRCC Networking cum Sports shooting activity	3 Feb 2013	8am to 1pm	SAFRA Yishun	Marsiling IRCC
Inter-Faith Carnival at Bishan-Toa Payoh	3 Feb 2013	8am to 3pm	An-Nahdhah Mosque	IRCCs in Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC
Easter Sunday Celebration	30 Mar 2013	2pm to 6pm	Toa Payoh HDB Hub	Toa Payoh Central IRCC

Quarterly Calendar of Courses for IRCC members

JANUARY

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

16

A platform to discuss ground racial and religious issues that may have negative impact in our constituency and on society at large.

- As IRCC members, what can we do to build network of trust in the community.
- How can we play a pivotal role in preventing racial and religious insensitive remarks from affecting our multi-ethnic and religious society.
- Discuss cases that have affected our society and how, as IRCC members, we can step in to dispel prevailing stereotypes.

Date: Wednesday, 16 January 2013

Time : 6.30pm – 9.30pm

Venue : The Grassroots' Club
(190 Ang Mo Kio Avenue 8, Singapore 568046)

INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIONS – VISIT TO SRI SRINIVASA PERUMAL TEMPLE

25

This workshop provides basic information on Hinduism. The visit will cover topics like the origin, scriptures, symbols, moral and ethical teachings, the do's and don't's, festivals, on rites and rituals and a tour of the Temple. Participants will learn more about Thaipusam, one of the major Hindu festivals in Singapore.

Date : Friday, 25 January 2013

Time : 7pm – 9pm

Venue: Hindu Endowments Board Office
(397 Serangoon Road, Singapore 218123)

SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS

26

- How we can use social media to learn and understand, and to leverage on its power for IRCC's roles.
- To use social media tools to exchange news and opinions to prevent conflicts and rumours from spreading.
- Stay in touch with fellow members on latest developments.

Date : Saturday, 26 January 2013

Time : 1pm – 5pm

Venue : Concorde Hotel
(100 Orchard Road, Singapore 238840)

FEBRUARY

INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIONS – VISIT TO THIAN HOCK KENG TEMPLE

2

This workshop provides basic information on Taoism. The visit will cover topics like the origin, scriptures, symbols, moral and ethical teachings, the do's and don't's, festivals, on rites and rituals and a tour of the temple. Participants will learn more about Taoism and Chinese New Year.

Date : Saturday, 2 February 2013

Time : 2pm – 5pm

Venue : Thian Hock Keng Temple (158 Telok Ayer Street, Singapore 068613)

BASIC COUNSELLING & MEDIATION EXERCISE

23

Aim to refresh participants' skills in tackling ground and neighbourhood issues by way of communication, listening and conflict resolution through intensive scenario-based activities. The workshop will be conducted in small groups for effective participation.

Date : Saturday, 23 February 2013

Time : 1.30pm – 5.30pm

Venue : OnePeople.sg (381 Toa Payoh Lorong 1, Singapore 319758)

MARCH

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

2

Crisis management involves dealing with violence, threats or terrorisms before, during, and after they have occurred.

- Be equipped with the skills and techniques to handle a crisis.
- Maintain contact with fellow members for possible activation.
- Disseminate timely and accurate information to members.
- Study possible cases for first-hand understanding.

Date : Saturday, 2 March 2013

Time : 1.30pm – 5.30pm

Venue : OnePeople.sg (381 Toa Payoh Lorong 1, Singapore 319758)

COMMUNITY LEADERS' CONFERENCE 2013

16

The CLC aims to engage Community Leaders on key issues, trends and developments pertaining to inter-ethnic relations and to provide a platform for discussion, exchange of views and sharing of best practices in promoting racial harmony.

- Sharing Session by International & Local Speakers – On countries that have been torn apart by racial and religious conflicts and that had led to enormous human loss and suffering, crimes against humanity and war crimes, a mass exodus and population transfer, material devastation and genocide.
- Practical models of community and interfaith engagement deployed in these post conflict situations would be a useful take away for community leaders.

Date : Saturday, 16 March 2013

Time : 2pm – 5pm

Venue : Republic Polytechnic, LT-E5 (9 Woodlands Ave 9, Singapore 738964)

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

26

A platform to discuss ground racial and religious issues that may have negative impact in our constituency and on society at large.

- As IRCC members, what can we do to build network of trust in the community.
- How can we play a pivotal role in preventing racial and religious insensitive from affecting our multiethnic and religious society.
- Discuss cases that have affected our society and how, as IRCC members, we can step in to dispel prevailing stereotypes and unfounded rumours.

Date : Tuesday, 26 March 2013

Time : 6.30pm – 9.30pm

Venue : SAFRA Toa Payoh Function Room, Level 3 (293 Toa Payoh Lor 6, Singapore 310190)



DIY Corner – Craft

In this section, we will feature one traditional craft or game of the various racial and religious communities in Singapore. As Chinese New Year is around the corner, we will start off with the traditional craft of Chinese Paper Cutting!

Chinese Paper Cutting

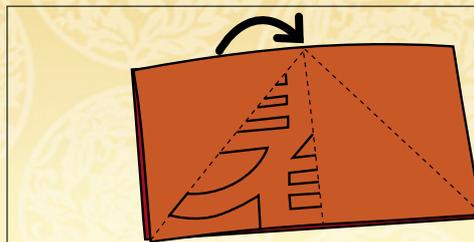
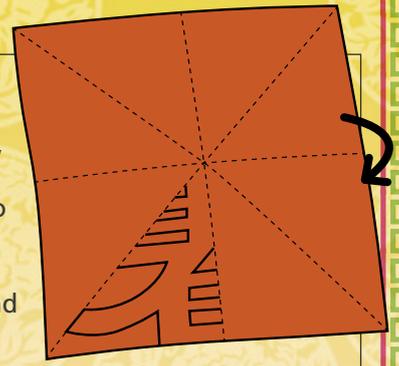
Chinese paper cutting or “Jian Zhi” (剪纸) is a very distinctive visual art of handicrafts from the Chinese. Skilled crafters can cut out intricate designs without any pre-drawn template in a matter of minutes. The paper cuttings are used in all kinds of celebrations, including Chinese New Year (Spring Festival), weddings, and when moving to a new home. The paper art will be pasted all over the home, for instance, on windows and doors, and the Chinese believe that they will bring good luck. Red coloured paper is used in Chinese paper cutting as the colour red symbolises prosperity and good fortune.

Follow the instructions to make your very own Chinese Paper Cutting. At the end of the DIY, you should get the Chinese character “春”, which means Spring in Mandarin. The Chinese paste these words all around the house, to usher in the New Year and the Spring season.

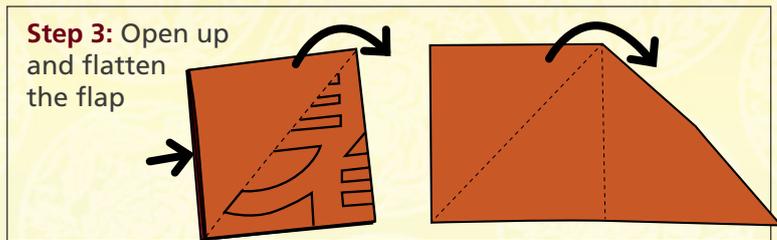
Did you know: Chap Goh Meh, also known as “Yuan Xiao” (元宵), falls on the last and fifteenth day of the Chinese New Year lunar cycle and it is celebrated with a family reunion at night. It is also known as Chinese Valentine’s Day.

Instructions:

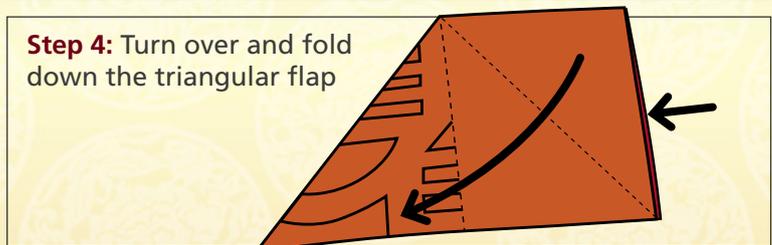
Step 1: You will need a piece of red square paper (approx 15cm x 15cm), a pair of scissors, a pencil and a ruler. Make the folds on the paper according to the dotted lines shown on the picture on the right. Open up the paper fully after folding and follow the picture to draw the template for the Chinese character “春” (spring) using a pencil and ruler.



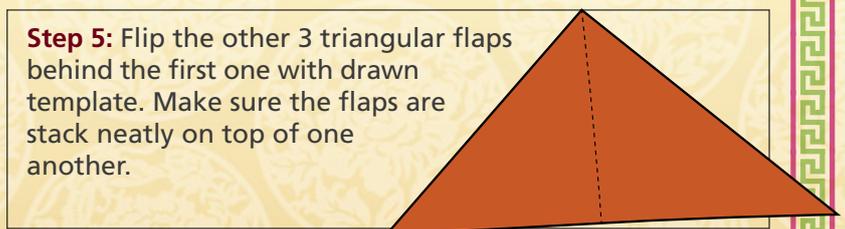
Step 2: Follow the dotted lines and fold the paper horizontally in half. Fold again in half.



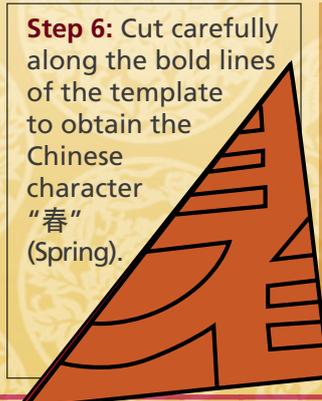
Step 3: Open up and flatten the flap



Step 4: Turn over and fold down the triangular flap



Step 5: Flip the other 3 triangular flaps behind the first one with drawn template. Make sure the flaps are stack neatly on top of one another.



Step 6: Cut carefully along the bold lines of the template to obtain the Chinese character “春” (Spring).

Step 7: Unfold. You may wish to cut a small hole at the top and string in red threads to hang the paper cutting as a lantern.





DIY Corner – Food

In this section, we feature traditional recipes from the various racial and religious communities in Singapore. Try it yourself, and share with your friends and neighbours!

Hot Cross Buns

Hot cross bun is a spiced sweet bun traditionally eaten hot or toasted on Good Friday (for year 2013, it falls on 29 March), which is observed on the Friday before Easter Sunday. On this day, Christians commemorate the passion and suffering of the Lord, Jesus Christ, on the cross, or crucifixion and the cross on the bun is a symbol of crucifixion.

Try the recipe below for some delicious home made hot cross buns! Recipe and photos credit to allrecipes.com



Ingredients (makes 12 buns)

- 3/4 cup warm water (45°C)
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon instant powdered milk
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 3/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1 egg white
- 1 egg yolk
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 3/4 cup dried currants
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons milk

Directions

1. Add warm water, butter, skim milk powder, 1/4 cup sugar, salt, egg, egg white, flour, and yeast into a mixer machine and start mixing.
2. When 5 minutes of kneading are left, add currants and cinnamon. Leave in machine till double.
3. Punch down on floured surface, cover, and let rest 10 minutes.
4. Shape into 12 balls and place in a greased 9 x 12 inch pan. Cover and let rise in a warm place for about 35-40 minutes till double.
5. Mix egg yolk and 2 tablespoons water. Brush on balls.
6. Bake at 190°C for 20 minutes. Remove from pan immediately and cool on wire rack.
7. To make crosses: mix together sugar, vanilla, and milk. Brush a "cross" on each cooled bun.

Did you know: Christians celebrate the resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ, on Easter Sunday (for year 2013, it falls on 31 March). Christians believe that according to the Scripture, Jesus paid the penalty of sin through his death, burial and resurrection, thus promising eternal life for his believers.

Easter Sunday





IRCC Quiz

Answer all 3 questions below and the first 10 correct entries (limited to 1 entry per person) will each stand to win \$10 worth of shopping vouchers!

Q1 The Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCC) are local-level _____ - _____ platforms in every constituency, formed to promote _____ and _____.

Q2 Why do the Chinese display paper cuttings at home on occasions such as Chinese New Year?

Q3 Which date will Good Friday fall on in year 2013?

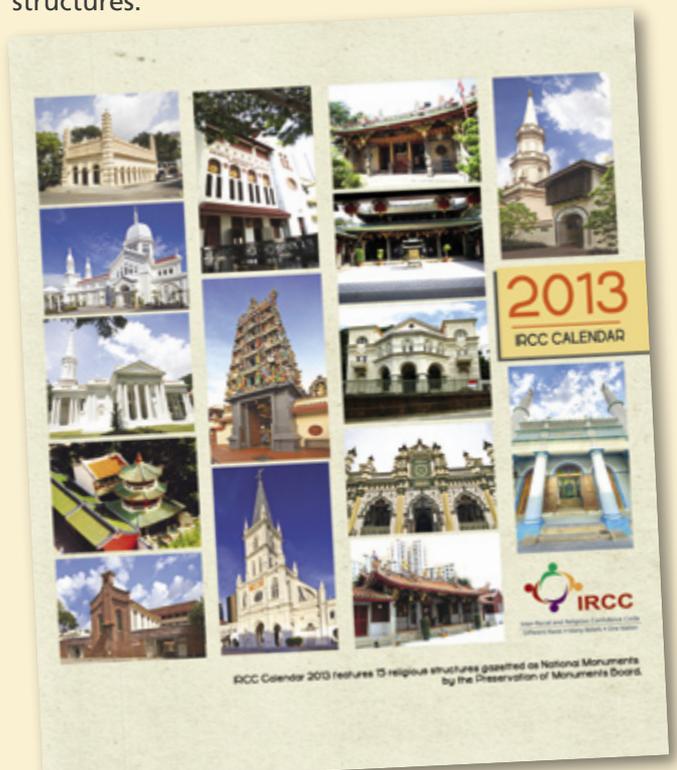
To participate, simply send in your answers together with your particulars: full name, identification card number, address and contact number via post or email to our correspondence details located at the bottom right hand corner of this page.

All entries must be submitted before **28 February 2013**. Incomplete entries will be disqualified.

Winners will be notified by post.

IRCC Calendar 2013

The IRCC Calendar was first introduced in 2008 and it has been featuring the major festivals celebrated by the various ethnic and religious communities in Singapore. For the 2013 edition, IRCC partnered the Preservation of Monuments Board (PMB) for the first time to feature 15 religious structures gazetted as national monuments. Each page in the calendar contains information and interesting facts of these structures.



IRCC Website

The IRCC website was set up in 2010 for outreach, information dissemination and to gather feedback. To find out more about IRCCs, please visit www.ircc.sg



You can also download the QR code reader application on your smartphone and scan the code on the left to visit the IRCC website!

We want to hear from you!

If you have any feedback for us on the IRCC Newsletter, feel free to drop us a message at our contact details below.

Contact Us



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140 Hill Street #02-00 Singapore 179369



Email: newsletter@ircc.sg



Getting to know more about IRCCs

Logo



Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle
Different Races • Many Beliefs • One Nation

The four figures in the logo represent different races and religions working together with understanding and tolerance.

The colours red, green, orange and violet represent Trust, Respect, Harmony and Co-operation.

The word IRCC is bold, highlighting the strength and confidence of the community.

Vision

To be networks of trust that unite people regardless of race or religion

Mission

- Build familiarity and strengthen relationships among and between ethnic, religious and community leaders
- Promote mutual understanding and appreciation of the different religions, cultures and practices among Singaporeans
- Facilitate collaborations among and between ethnic, religious and community groups for social and community causes
- Maintain social cohesion and instill solidarity in times of racial and religious tensions and conflicts

Core Values

Cooperation

We will work with each other to serve the larger community. In doing so, we will strengthen trust and friendships amongst ourselves and our communities through more interactions and shared experiences.

Harmony

We are amicable and comfortable in each other's company and will work towards enlarging our common space.

Respect

We are considerate and sensitive towards each other, and respect each other's religion, culture and practices. We will also strive to inculcate this value in our respective communities.

Trust

We value our friendship and will stand by each other in times of need. We place confidence in each other to act responsibly in the best interests of the larger community, regardless of race or religion.