

# Interfaith Guidebook



**Humanist Society** Singapore

Guided by Reason, Informed by Evidence, Driven by Compassion



# Foreword

The Humanist Society Interfaith Guidebook is reflective of hash.peace's Research, Reflect, Discourse and Develop (R2D2) framework. hash.peace is grateful for this genuine and much needed effort to consolidate and disseminate best practices when holding productive interfaith conversations. It is easy to forget that not everyone is accustomed to having such deep and sacred discussions about one's faith, and this guidebook serves as an accessible starting point for both the uninitiated and experienced interfaith facilitator. "Be(ing) Intentional" really resonated with us. One should actively partake in such discussions by reading up first (Research), internalising what strikes out to us (Reflect), carrying away something with us after the dialogue ends (Discourse), and bring solutions to the table such as this simple yet needed guidebook (Develop).





Mr Didi Amzar Bin Harun is the General Secretary of hash.peace since March 2022 and has been actively involved in hash.peace since 2019. Being a social harmony advocate, he studies various socio-political theories & research within the fields of diversity and inclusion, particularly on race & gender.

Mr Leonard Sim is the President of hash.peace since March 2022 and has been with hash.peace since 2019. He is interested in facilitating discussions surrounding Singapore's social harmony, and learning about the different cultures and communities in Singapore.





# Introduction

Singapore's racial and religious harmony is always a work in progress. One of the most diverse countries in the world, our island city-state is home to more than ten religions and four racial groups. Many nationalities also live, work and play here.

Our country has a strong record in interfaith and interracial work spanning several decades. Despite this, some individuals have never once participated in such dialogues in their life. Even for active participants, some find it challenging to discuss religious and racial differences in fear of offending the other side.

The good news is that interfaith and interracial dialogue is not rocket science. It can be done by anyone, as long as there is an open mind and a good heart. In this spirit, we have written this guidebook to help individuals navigate touchy conversations.



While some might find it odd that a non-religious group like the Humanist Society (Singapore) is interested in interfaith issues, in reality the non-religious are no different from many religious believers in wanting a meaningful purpose in life, opportunities to learn from other worldviews, and above all, a tolerant society with freedom of belief.



Mr Xue Jianyue is the President of the Humanist Society (Singapore). An alumnus of Nanyang Technological University, he was a media professional before making a mid-career switch to the aviation industry. In his spare time, he enjoys playing the piano and reading up on geopolitics and history.



# 1. Be curious.

Before engaging in discourse, remember to enter a conversation with the intent to learn; not to argue, debate, or judge. Seek to be understood and to understand.





## 2. Be respectful.

Do respect others as they would like to be respected. Show empathy and compassion.





### 3. Practise confidentiality.

We need to build safe spaces to hold difficult conversations. Respecting each other's privacy enables you to share openly and honestly.





## 4. Be yourself.

Share your authentic perspectives as yourself; not as representatives of any group or identity. Likewise, relate to others as individuals too.





## 5. Provide unconditional positive regard.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “we must be as courteous to a man as we are to a picture, which we are willing to give the advantage of a good light.” Be graceful in accepting failings, accepting each other (including yourself!), and encouraging growth.





## 6. Be intentional.

Allow time to reflect upon your conversations and for follow-up actions, such as further readings or even more conversations with each other.







# Acknowledgements

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