

CULTIVATING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN MISSIONARY FORMATION

Introduction

Formation is much more than acquiring knowledge or developing skills. It is a lifelong journey of becoming more fully the person God calls each of us to be. The Claretian Formation Framework understands this journey as one of integral growth, where the human, spiritual, intellectual, charismatic, pastoral, and community dimensions are woven together to shape missionaries after the heart of Christ.

Within this journey, **Emotional Intelligence** plays a vital role. It is the ability to recognize and understand our own emotions, manage them wisely, relate compassionately with others, and respond to life's challenges with maturity and hope. These are not simply psychological skills; they are qualities that enable missionaries to live the Gospel authentically in everyday life.

Mission today is profoundly relational. Whether accompanying individuals, living in community, exercising leadership, resolving conflicts, or proclaiming the Gospel, missionaries constantly engage with people and their stories. Emotional maturity enables them to listen with empathy, discern with wisdom, communicate with charity, and remain faithful even in moments of stress, disappointment, or uncertainty. It helps transform good intentions into compassionate actions and knowledge into pastoral wisdom.

This module is designed to foster that growth by developing the five core competencies of Emotional Intelligence: **self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills**. Through personal reflection, practical exercises, spiritual integration, community experiences, and formative accompaniment, formandi are invited to deepen their understanding of themselves and strengthen their capacity to love and serve others more authentically.

Ultimately, the goal is not merely to become emotionally competent but to become more Christ-like. As missionaries grow in emotional maturity, they become more capable of building life-giving communities, accompanying people with compassion, exercising leadership with humility, and witnessing to the Gospel with credibility and joy. In this way, they continue to grow as **mystics enflamed in mission**, whose hearts, minds, and lives are increasingly shaped by the compassionate love of Christ.

Purpose of This Guide

This guide helps formators accompany formandi in developing Emotional Intelligence (EI) — a crucial component of holistic formation that prepares them to be effective, compassionate, and credible leaders in ministry.

It offers:

- Conceptual grounding
- Competency-based framework
- Assessment indicators
- Exercises and strategies
- Spiritual reflections

Understanding Emotional Intelligence in Formation

Key Idea: A Broader View of Human Formation

Intellectual ability (IQ) has traditionally been emphasized in seminary and religious formation. While it remains important—enabling clear thinking, solid theology, and sound judgment—it is **not enough on its own**.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) complements cognitive skills by integrating:

- **Cognitive** (thinking, analysing, understanding)
- **Emotional** (feeling, regulating, understanding oneself)
- **Social** (relating, communicating, collaborating)

This integration fosters mature, balanced, and effective leaders for ministry who can not only think well, but **live well** and **relate well**.

Why Emotional Intelligence Matters in Ministry

Ministry is *deeply relational*. Priests, religious, and lay leaders are called to **shepherd**, **accompany**, and **lead** God's people. This work demands:

- **Complex Decision-Making:** Ministry leaders often face challenging moral, pastoral, and practical decisions. EI allows them to weigh perspectives with empathy, self-awareness, and clarity.
- **Empathy:** Understanding the joys, sorrows, and needs of others is central to pastoral care. Without empathy, ministry becomes rigid or dismissive.
- **Self-Awareness:** Recognizing one's emotions, biases, limits, and gifts helps prevent burnout, conflict, and spiritual blindness.
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Leading, teaching, counselling, and collaborating all require skills in listening, persuasion, negotiation, and building trust.

In short: A missionary needs to be a **whole person**, not just a clever one.

Theological and Pastoral Grounding

- Jesus Christ embodies perfect integration of head and heart: He taught with authority *and* compassion. He read the hearts of others, wept with them, challenged them lovingly.
- The Good Shepherd knows his sheep and calls them by name (Jn 10:3-4). He models deep personal connection.
- St. Paul reminds us: "*If I have all knowledge... but do not have love, I am nothing*" (1 Cor 13:2).

Formation must imitate Christ's way: developing compassionate, discerning, emotionally mature missionaries.

Practical Formation Implications for Formators

Here are some concrete ways to integrate this understanding into your role as formator:

1. Balance your program:

- Don't over-prioritize academics. Integrate human and spiritual formation equally.

2. Model Emotional Intelligence:

- Be aware of your own emotions, responses, biases.
- Show empathy and patience in accompaniment.

3. Create Safe Spaces for Growth:

- Encourage sharing of feelings in small groups or one-on-one.
- Normalize struggles, doubts, and emotional challenges.

4. Integrate EI Topics Explicitly:

- Teach about emotions in conferences or workshops.
- Use case studies of ministry requiring empathy and conflict resolution.

5. Assess Broadly:

- Don't evaluate only knowledge. Look at emotional and social maturity.

6. Link to Spirituality:

- Invite prayer and reflection on emotional experiences.
- Use Gospel scenes to meditate on Jesus' emotional life and relationships.

Reflection Questions for Formators

- How balanced is our current formation program in developing intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual maturity?
- Do we have practices in place that help formandi grow in self-awareness and empathy?
- How do I, as formator, model emotional maturity?
- How can I create a culture in the formation house that values emotional honesty and growth?

Suggested Formation Activity

Session Idea: Emotional Intelligence

- Introduce the concept of EI.
- Share examples of ministry challenges requiring empathy and self-awareness.
- Small group discussion: When was I aware/unaware of my emotions in ministry?
- Prayer on Jesus' emotional life (e.g., weeping over Jerusalem, anger in the temple, compassion for the sick).

Key Takeaway for Formators: Intellectual formation is essential but incomplete without emotional and social formation. Emotional Intelligence transforms knowledge into pastoral wisdom, enabling mature, compassionate, and effective ministry leadership.

1. Self-Awareness in Formation

"Know thyself" is the beginning of wisdom. Self-awareness is foundational for spiritual, emotional, and ministerial maturity. It is the ability to recognize one's emotions, understand their impact, assess one's strengths and limitations realistically, and hold a healthy self-confidence.

For ministry: A formator cannot accompany others well unless they know their own interior movements. Similarly, a priest or religious who is unaware of their emotions may react poorly under pressure, project unresolved pain onto others, or fail to empathize.

Key Components to Develop

- **Emotional Awareness**
 - Recognizing one's emotions and understanding their effect on thinking and behavior.
 - Being able to answer: "What am I feeling? Why?"
- **Accurate Self-Assessment**
 - Honest understanding of strengths, weaknesses, patterns, and triggers.
 - Openness to feedback.
- **Self-Confidence**
 - Trust in one's worth and abilities without arrogance.
 - Ability to stand up respectfully for one's convictions.

Formation Objectives

By the end of ongoing practice, formandi should be able to:

- Identify and name their emotions with increasing accuracy.
- Reflect on how emotions influence decisions and relationships.
- Recognize personal strengths and areas needing growth.

- Accept constructive feedback without defensiveness.
- Develop realistic, grounded self-confidence.

Formator Strategies

1. Accompaniment Sessions

- Invite sharing about emotional experiences without judgment.
- Ask gentle, open-ended questions:
 - *“How did you feel about that?”*
 - *“What do you think that feeling is telling you?”*
- Affirm honesty and vulnerability.

2. Reflective Journaling

- Suggest prompts:
 - *“What am I feeling now? Why?”*
 - *“How did my emotions shape my words and actions today?”*
 - *“What did I learn about myself this week?”*
- Review journaling privately with the formator if appropriate.

3. Small Group Sharing

- Organize trust-building sessions where formandi can share experiences of:
 - A time they felt strong emotion.
 - How they handled feedback.
- Emphasize confidentiality and respect.

4. Modelling by Formators

- Be appropriately transparent about your own learning and limits.
- Share examples of times you learned from feedback or named your own emotions.

5. Teaching/Conferences

- Offer short teachings on emotions in Scripture.
- Discuss Jesus’ emotional life as fully human.

Assessment Indicators

Positive Indicators

- Accurately names emotions (e.g., “I felt disappointed,” not just “bad”).
- Shares feelings appropriately in formation settings.
- Asks questions or clarifies when confused.
- Accepts and reflects on feedback without aggression or withdrawal.
- Shows growing humility about strengths and limits.

Negative Indicators

- Blames others reflexively.
- Is defensive or angry when corrected.
- Refuses to discuss feelings or denies having them.
- Fearful of expressing personal views.
- Overly harsh self-criticism or perfectionism.

Practical Exercises for Formandi

1. Climate Check

- Before starting prayer, class, or community work, pause.
- Ask silently: *“What is my mood? What am I feeling? How might this affect what I do next?”*
- Formators can lead this as a 1-minute silent practice before group sessions.

2. Mindful Eating

- During a meal, focus on taste, smell, texture.
- Notice thoughts and emotions arising.
- Use this practice to develop awareness of how quickly we react without thinking.

3. Feedback Reflection

- After receiving feedback, write:
 - *What did I hear?*
 - *What do I feel about it?*
 - *What can I learn from it?*
- Encourage formandi to share reflections privately with a formator if desired.

4. Speak Up Practice

- In meetings or classes, encourage polite sharing of opinions or questions.
- Practice phrasing: *“I’d like to share...”* or *“I see it this way...”*
- Address fear of being wrong as part of learning.

5. Guided Meditation

- Invite formandi to pray about moments they failed to recognize or regulate emotion.
- Suggest: *“Lord, show me what I was feeling. Help me understand why. Teach me to respond in love.”*

Questions for Accompaniment

- *What feelings come up most often for you?*
- *How comfortable are you naming and sharing them?*
- *What happens in you when someone criticizes you?*
- *How do you see your strengths? Your limits?*
- *How do your emotions affect your prayer?*

Group Discussion Ideas

- *Share about a time you realized you were wrong and learned from it.*
- *Discuss how fear of criticism can hold us back.*
- *Explore how feelings can be a gift in discerning God’s will.*

Spiritual Integration

What Does Scripture Say?

Scripture repeatedly invites us to know our own hearts before God. True self-awareness is not self-absorption but the beginning of wisdom and conversion. God desires truth in our innermost being, where our thoughts, emotions, desires, and motivations are formed. Throughout the Bible, self-knowledge is presented as a gift that leads to humility, discernment, and deeper communion with God.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” (Psalm 139:23–24). David does not fear God’s examination. Instead, he welcomes it because he knows that honest self-knowledge opens the way to transformation.

The Book of Proverbs reminds us: **“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”** (Proverbs 4:23). Our emotions influence our decisions, relationships, and ministry. Learning to recognize them allows us to respond with wisdom rather than impulse.

Jesus frequently invited people to examine their own hearts before judging others. **“First remove the beam from your own eye.”** (Matthew 7:5).

Christian self-awareness therefore begins with humility, honesty, and openness before God.

Formation Insight: Self-awareness is the doorway to spiritual growth. We cannot surrender to God what we refuse to acknowledge within ourselves.

Gospel Reflections

Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:49)

- His clear sense of purpose despite his youth.
- Invite reflection: *“What is my mission? How do I become aware of it?”*

Gethsemane (Matthew 26:38)

- Honest, vulnerable sharing of fear and sorrow.
- Reflection question: *“Can I bring my deepest emotions honestly to God?”*

Prayer Exercise

“Lord Jesus, you knew joy, sorrow, anger, and love.
Teach me to know my own heart as you did.
Help me see my feelings as guides, not enemies.
Give me courage to be honest with myself and with you.
Amen.”

Formator’s Takeaway: Self-awareness is not self-indulgence. It is the foundation of authentic discipleship and mature ministry. Your role is to create **safe spaces**, model **honest reflection**, and accompany formandi as they learn to **name, understand, and integrate** their emotional lives into their following of Christ.

2. Self-Regulation in Formation

“Be angry, but do not sin” (Eph 4:26)

Self-regulation is the ability to manage our emotions, impulses, and reactions in ways that are constructive and consistent with our values. It is not about suppressing feelings but responding to them wisely.

For priests and religious, this is essential: They will be faced with criticism, conflict, pressure, and disappointment. The ability to remain composed, honest, adaptable, and principled even in adversity marks spiritual maturity and pastoral credibility.

Key Components to Develop

- **Self-Control:** Managing disruptive emotions and impulses.
- **Trustworthiness:** Acting with honesty and integrity.
- **Conscientiousness:** Taking responsibility for personal performance.
- **Adaptability:** Flexibility in facing change or surprise.
- **Innovativeness:** Openness to new ideas and solutions.

Formation Objectives

By cultivating self-regulation, formandi should:

- Recognize when emotions risk driving their behaviour destructively.
- Develop strategies to calm themselves and respond wisely.
- Grow in reliability, honesty, and accountability.
- Handle changes and setbacks with flexibility and grace.
- Think creatively when faced with challenges.

Formator Strategies

1. Regular Honest Conversations

- Ask: *"How did you handle anger or frustration this week?"*
- Normalize talking about conflict and stress without shame.
- Invite formandi to identify triggers and plan responses.

2. Feedback Culture

- Offer clear, respectful feedback about behaviours needing better regulation (lateness, dismissiveness, short temper).
- Praise growth in patience, responsibility, and flexibility.

3. Role Modelling

- Model calmness in conflict.
- Show integrity by admitting your own mistakes.
- Respond to criticism with openness.

4. Teaching/Workshops

- Host sessions on stress management, non-violent communication, mindfulness.
- Reflect on ethical decision-making and honesty.

5. Community Practices

- Encourage punctuality, shared chores, collective accountability.
- Support innovation by welcoming new ideas.

Assessment Indicators

Positive Indicators

- Remains calm and respectful under pressure.
- Punctual and reliable in commitments.
- Accepts responsibilities and fulfils them well.
- Honest even when it costs.
- Adapts to changes without complaint.
- Suggests creative solutions.

Negative Indicators

- Short-tempered or irritable.
- Defensive or dishonest when confronted.
- Avoids responsibilities or procrastinates.
- Criticizes others for differences.
- Resists change stubbornly.
- Dismisses new ideas as threatening.

Practical Exercises for Formandi

1. Punctuality Challenge

- Make a goal of arriving early for prayer, meals, meetings.
- Reflect daily: *"What helped or hindered me today?"*
- Formators can affirm progress and discuss challenges.

2. Criticism Reflection

- After being corrected or criticized:
 - *"What emotions did I feel?"*
 - *"What truth might be in this feedback?"*
 - *"How can I grow from it?"*
- Journaling or accompaniment discussion.

3. Community Responsibility Commitment

- Choose a task that might be avoided (cleaning, organizing).
- Plan to do it well, even creatively.
- Reflect on attitude: *“Do I serve for praise or out of love?”*

4. Creative Problem-Solving Session

- Identify a community issue (untidy space, conflicts, lack of activities).
- Brainstorm solutions in small groups.
- Encourage innovative, out-of-the-box thinking.

5. Emotional Pause Practice

- When upset or provoked:
 - Pause.
 - Breathe deeply.
 - Name the emotion silently.
 - Choose a considered response.
- Practice in real-life conflicts or role-plays.

Questions for Accompaniment

- *What situations make you lose composure?*
- *How do you typically react to criticism?*
- *What values guide your decisions in tough moments?*
- *How do you see yourself handling responsibility?*
- *How flexible are you when plans change?*

Group Discussion Ideas

- *Share a time you reacted poorly in anger. What did you learn?*
- *Discuss why honesty can be hard, even in small things.*
- *How does resisting change affect community life?*
- *What are creative ways to solve a problem in formation life?*

Spiritual Reflection

What Does Scripture Say?

The Bible does not ask us to suppress emotions but to govern them through wisdom and grace. Emotional maturity is expressed in self-control, patience, and fidelity to God's will, even under pressure. St. Paul teaches: **“Be angry but do not sin.”** (Ephesians 4:26).

Anger itself is not sinful. What matters is how we respond to it. The Letter of James adds: **“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”** (James 1:19–20).

Wisdom is shown in thoughtful responses rather than impulsive reactions. The Book of Proverbs observes: **“Better the patient person than the warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.”** (Proverbs 16:32). True strength is found in mastering oneself.

Finally, St. Paul reminds us that self-control is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 5:22–23**

Formation Insight: Emotional regulation is not emotional suppression. It is allowing the Holy Spirit to transform instinctive reactions into Christ-like responses.

Gospel Scenes for Meditation

Jesus in the Desert (Lk 4:1–13)

- Tempted but remains faithful.
- *“What are my temptations to react badly?”*

Jesus before Herod (Lk 13:31–32)

- Calm, resolute, honest despite threat.
- *“How do I speak truth even when it’s hard?”*

Gethsemane (Jn 18:1–11)

- Firm but protective of disciples.
- *“How do I balance truth, love, and courage under pressure?”*

Prayer Exercise

“Lord Jesus, teach me your calm and strength.

Help me see my emotions clearly.

Grant me patience and courage to choose love over anger,
truth over fear, and service over selfishness.

Amen.”

Formator’s Takeaway

Self-regulation is not denial of emotion, but mastery of it in the service of love. Your task as formator is to:

- Normalize talking about emotions and challenges.
- Encourage honest self-reflection.
- Provide a safe space to practice new responses.
- Model trustworthiness, flexibility, and integrity.

3. Self-Motivation in Formation

“My food is to do the will of the one who sent me.” (Jn 4:34)

Self-motivation is the inner drive that moves a person to act with purpose, persistence, and enthusiasm even in the face of obstacles. In formation, this is crucial for developing missionaries and ministers who can serve generously without constant external prodding.

A self-motivated priest or religious embraces their mission wholeheartedly, remains faithful through difficulties, and inspires others by example.

Key Components to Develop

- **Achievement Drive**
 - Desire to improve and meet high standards of service.
 - Pursuit of excellence, not perfectionism.
- **Commitment**
 - Alignment with the goals and values of the congregation/community.
 - Readiness to make personal sacrifices for the mission.
- **Initiative**
 - Willingness to act without waiting to be told.
 - Seeing opportunities, even in obstacles.
- **Optimism**
 - Hopeful, positive mindset that perseveres despite setbacks.
 - Viewing challenges as learning opportunities.
- **Passion**
 - Desire earnestly to engage in some mission

- To make life meaningful through service in the Congregation.

Formation Objectives

By developing self-motivation, formandi should:

- Articulate personal and communal goals clearly.
- Sustain commitment even when tasks are hard or unrecognized.
- Take initiative in addressing needs without waiting for orders.
- Remain hopeful and resilient when facing difficulties or failures.

Formator Strategies

1. Mission Clarification

- Help formandi write personal mission statements.
- Link daily tasks to the congregation's larger mission.

2. Encourage Ownership

- Invite formandi to plan and lead activities or projects.
- Ask: *"What do you think should be done about this need?"*

3. Recognize Effort

- Affirm initiative, even if imperfect.
- Highlight persistence and learning from failure.

4. Teach Realistic Goal-Setting

- Work with formandi to set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
- Review progress regularly.

Formation Tool: SMART Goal-Setting Model

Help formandi move from vague aspirations ("I want to pray better") to concrete, measurable commitments that can be reviewed during accompaniment.

The SMART Model

Element	Guiding Question	Example
S – Specific	What exactly do I want to achieve?	Improve my personal prayer life by dedicating a fixed period to daily silent prayer.
M – Measurable	How will I know I am making progress?	Pray silently for 30 minutes each day and record it in my journal.
A – Achievable	Is this realistic given my current circumstances?	Begin with 30 minutes rather than aiming for one hour immediately.
R – Relevant	Why is this important for my vocation and mission?	A deeper prayer life strengthens my relationship with Christ and my missionary commitment.
T – Time-bound	By when will I review this goal?	Review progress with my formator after one month.

5. Model Perseverance and Hope

- Share stories of your own challenges and sustained commitment.
- Show positivity even during community problems.

Assessment Indicators

Positive Indicators

- Perseveres with tasks even when difficult or unrewarded.
- Suggests practical improvements for the community.
- Participates actively in meetings, liturgies, and projects.
- Encourages and affirms confreres, especially those struggling.
- Volunteers readily for shared responsibilities.
- Maintains hope and calm in adversity.

Negative Indicators

- Easily gives up when frustrated or criticized.
- Distracted by unimportant or self-indulgent activities.
- Resists or blocks new initiatives with negativity.
- Overly dependent on direction—won't act unless told.
- Procrastinates important responsibilities.
- Reacts to obstacles with discouragement or cynicism.

Practical Exercises for Formandi

1. Personal Mission Statement

- Write 3–5 sentences describing:
 - *“Why am I here?”*
 - *“What kind of minister do I want to become?”*
 - *“What gifts do I offer the Church?”*
- Share voluntarily in small groups or with a formator.

2. Goal Planning Workshop

- Break down a current project into:
 - Long-term goal
 - Short-term goals
 - Concrete steps
 - Timeline
- Include personal goals (e.g., prayer discipline, community involvement).

3. Initiative Challenge

- Formandi identify one need in the house or community.
- Plan and implement a small project addressing it.
- Reflect on the experience in accompaniment.

4. Gratitude and Positivity Practice

- Daily or weekly journal:
 - *“What went well today?”*
 - *“How did I see God at work?”*
- Share one positive observation during community meetings.

5. Resilience Reflection

- Identify a personal setback or failure.
- Write or discuss:
 - *“What did I learn?”*
 - *“How can I approach it differently next time?”*

Questions for Accompaniment

- *What energizes you about your vocation?*
- *When do you find it hardest to stay motivated?*
- *What goals are important to you this year?*

- *How do you react to failure or obstacles?*
- *What small step can you take toward your mission today?*

Group Discussion Ideas

- *Share a time you were proud of completing something hard.*
- *What obstacles usually stop us from acting?*
- *How do we encourage each other when someone is discouraged?*
- *What does “commitment to community” look like in daily life?*

Spiritual Reflection

What Does Scripture Say?

Scripture consistently encourages perseverance, hope, and wholehearted commitment to God's mission. Our deepest motivation comes not from external rewards but from our relationship with Christ. Jesus declares: **“My food is to do the will of him who sent me.”** (John 4:34). His mission flows from love rather than obligation.

St. Paul encourages believers: **“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.”** (Colossians 3:23). Mission becomes joyful when it is rooted in love rather than duty alone.

The Letter to the Hebrews urges perseverance. **“Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”** (Hebrews 12:1–2). Hope enables us to remain faithful despite difficulties.

Isaiah also reminds us: **“Those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength.”** (Isaiah 40:31)

Formation Insight: Missionary perseverance is sustained not by willpower alone but by a heart continually renewed by God's love.

Gospel Scenes for Meditation

Jesus in the Temple at 12 (Lk 2:49)

- Clarity of purpose even in youth.
- *“Did you not know I must be in my Father’s house?”*

Jesus’ Mission Statement (Jn 4:34)

- *“My food is to do the will of the one who sent me.”*
- Deep motivation rooted in love for the Father.

Holy Thursday (Jn 13:1)

- *“Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.”*
- Faithfulness despite the betrayal ahead.

Prayer Exercise

“Lord Jesus,
Inflame my heart with your zeal.
Give me clarity of purpose,
Courage to act without being asked,
Perseverance when the work is hard,
And hope that endures through every trial.
Amen.”

Formator’s Takeaway

Motivation cannot be imposed from outside—it must be awakened from within.

Your role as formator:

- Help formandi see meaning in their work and prayer.
- Encourage goal-setting and reflection.
- Affirm efforts and small steps forward.
- Model hope and joy even in challenges.

4. Social Awareness in Formation

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” (Rom 12:15)

Social awareness is the ability to recognize and understand the emotions, needs, perspectives, and contexts of others. It involves empathy, service, cultural sensitivity, and an awareness of the social dynamics around us.

For priests and religious, this competence is essential for authentic pastoral ministry. It enables them to truly accompany people, build community, and foster unity in diverse and often divided contexts.

Key Components to Develop

- **Empathy**
 - Sensing others’ feelings and perspectives.
 - Listening deeply and without judgment.
- **Service Orientation**
 - Anticipating and meeting the needs of those under care.
 - A genuine desire to help.
- **Developing Others**
 - Recognizing potential in others and supporting growth.
- **Intercultural Sensitivity**
 - Valuing, understanding, and embracing cultural diversity.
- **Political Awareness**
 - Perceiving group dynamics, power relationships, and social forces.

Formation Objectives

By developing social awareness, formandi should:

- Listen with genuine attention and empathy.
- Recognize and respond to the needs of others.
- Appreciate and celebrate cultural differences.
- Read group dynamics wisely.
- Foster a spirit of service and accompaniment.

Formator Strategies

1. Modelling Empathy

- Listen well to formandi.
- Respond thoughtfully to their needs.
- Share stories of times you learned to be more empathetic.

2. Encourage Active Listening

- Teach and practice listening skills:
 - Maintaining eye contact.
 - Summarizing what was heard.

- Avoiding interrupting.

3. Foster a Culture of Service

- Celebrate acts of service in the community.
- Highlight connections between service and the Gospel.

4. Address Cultural Diversity

- Name and affirm cultural, linguistic, or regional differences in the house.
- Teach about intercultural dialogue.
- Challenge stereotypes and biases respectfully.

5. Teach Group Dynamics Awareness

- Use case studies to discuss community power dynamics.
- Reflect on decision-making processes and inclusivity.

Assessment Indicators

Positive Indicators

- Sensitive to the needs of others.
- Listens attentively and empathetically.
- Offers help without being asked.
- Welcomes and appreciates cultural differences.
- Understands and navigates community dynamics respectfully.
- Speaks common languages in multilingual settings to include others.

Negative Indicators

- Self-absorbed; overlooks others' needs.
- Relates mainly for personal gain.
- Uncomfortable outside their own cultural group.
- Stereotypes, judges, or excludes.
- Fails to see or abuses power dynamics.
- Ignores strangers or speaks only one's own language in groups.

Practical Exercises for Formandi

1. Empathy Practice

- Pair up formandi. One shares a recent personal experience. The other listens without interruption and then summarizes: *"What I heard you say is..."*
- Switch roles.
- Debrief as a group.

2. Listening Challenge

- For one day each week, formandi commit to intentionally listening to others without giving advice or interrupting.
- Reflect in journaling or accompaniment:
 - *"What did I learn about the other?"*
 - *"How did I feel as a listener?"*

3. Service Reflection

- Identify someone in the community who may need help.
- Offer concrete assistance without seeking praise.
- Reflect:
 - *"How did it feel to serve?"*
 - *"What did I notice about their needs?"*

4. Cultural Intelligence Activity

- Formandi research or present on a cultural tradition different from their own.
- Discuss:
 - *“What do I appreciate about this tradition?”*
 - *“What biases do I need to challenge in myself?”*

5. Community Power Map

- As a group, draw the “social map” of the community:
 - Who holds formal and informal influence?
 - How are decisions made?
- Discuss healthy vs. unhealthy dynamics.

Questions for Accompaniment

- *How well do you listen to others?*
- *When do you find it hardest to empathize?*
- *How aware are you of the needs in our community?*
- *What do you appreciate about cultures different from yours?*
- *How do you see power working in our house?*

Group Discussion Ideas

- *Share a time someone really listened to you. How did it feel?*
- *What stops us from noticing others’ needs?*
- *How can we make our community more welcoming to cultural diversity?*
- *What are the hidden power dynamics in our community? How do we talk about them?*

Spiritual Reflection

What Does Scripture Say?

Throughout Scripture, God reveals Himself as One who sees, hears, and responds to the cries of His people. He continually invites His followers to cultivate compassionate hearts that recognize the dignity and suffering of others.

Jesus summarizes the Law: **“Love your neighbour as yourself.”** (Matthew 22:39). Authentic love begins by seeing others with compassion.

St. Paul writes: **“Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.”** (Romans 12:15). Empathy means entering into another person's experience without judgment.

The Letter to the Philippians encourages believers: **“In humility consider others better than yourselves.”** (Philippians 2:3–4). Christian maturity shifts attention from self-interest toward the good of others.

The First Letter of Peter reminds us: **“Be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.”** (1 Peter 3:8).

Formation Insight: To see others with the eyes of Christ is the beginning of authentic pastoral ministry.

Gospel Scenes for Meditation

Jesus and the Woman at the Well (Jn 4:7–26)

- Crossing cultural barriers.
- Attentive, respectful dialogue.

Healing the Sick and Marginalized (Mk 2:1–12; Lk 7:11–17)

- Seeing and responding to needs others ignored.

Jesus and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1–10)

- Recognizing a man on the margins and restoring his dignity.

Prayer Exercise

“Lord Jesus,
Open my eyes to see others as you do.
Give me ears to hear their stories and hearts.
Free me from selfishness and prejudice.
Teach me to serve with humility,
To honour the dignity of every person,
And to build communion in your name.
Amen.”

Formator’s Takeaway

Social awareness is not just a skill—it is a way of seeing with the eyes of Christ.

Your role as formator:

- Model empathy and service in daily life.
- Create spaces for honest, respectful conversation about differences.
- Challenge biases gently but firmly.
- Guide formandi to see not only individual needs but the social dynamics that shape community life.

5. Social Skills in Formation

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Mt 5:9)

Social skills are the abilities that allow us to build healthy, effective, and collaborative relationships. They enable priests and religious to lead, communicate, manage conflict, foster cooperation, and inspire others toward a shared mission.

In ministry, social skills are *not optional*. They are essential for building trust with parishioners, collaborating with fellow clergy or lay leaders, managing change in communities, and resolving inevitable conflicts with compassion and wisdom.

Key Components to Develop

- **Influence**
 - Positively shaping others’ attitudes and behaviours.
- **Communication**
 - Clear, respectful, effective verbal and nonverbal expression.
- **Leadership**
 - Inspiring and guiding groups with vision and integrity.
- **Change Catalyst**
 - Recognizing and championing needed change.
- **Conflict Management**
 - Negotiating disagreements with fairness and empathy.
- **Building Bonds**
 - Cultivating meaningful, supportive relationships.
- **Collaboration & Cooperation**
 - Working with others toward shared goals.
- **Team Capabilities**
 - Creating synergy in groups, nurturing a sense of belonging.

Formation Objectives

By developing social skills, formandi should:

- Communicate clearly and respectfully, even in disagreements.
- Influence others positively through example and persuasion.
- Take initiative in leadership roles when needed.
- Navigate and facilitate change processes.
- Manage conflicts with empathy, fairness, and diplomacy.
- Build and sustain supportive, honest relationships.
- Foster teamwork and collaboration in community settings.

Formator Strategies

1. Modelling Social Skills

- Demonstrate respectful communication in all interactions.
- Show vulnerability and humility as a leader.
- Model fair conflict resolution.

2. Structured Practice

- Use role-plays for conflict negotiation, leadership scenarios, persuasion.
- Assign leadership roles in liturgy, service projects, community meetings.

3. Feedback and Reflection

- Offer specific, constructive feedback on social interactions.
- Encourage self-reflection on relationship patterns.

4. Teach Core Concepts

- Run workshops on non-violent communication.
- Discuss what healthy influence, leadership, and teamwork look like in Christian ministry.

5. Build Community Culture

- Foster open, respectful dialogue about conflicts.
- Reward collaborative initiatives.
- Celebrate good communication and teamwork publicly.

Assessment Indicators

Positive Indicators

- Takes responsibility and leadership roles confidently.
- Articulates ideas clearly and respectfully.
- Responds well to others' needs and ideas.
- Seeks win-win solutions in conflicts.
- Works well in teams, shares credit, and encourages others.
- Builds trust and rapport even with those who differ.

Negative Indicators

- Avoids responsibility or leadership out of fear or apathy.
- Dominates or silences others in discussions.
- Struggles to clearly express ideas.
- Reacts defensively or aggressively in conflict.
- Undermines teamwork through gossip or selfishness.
- Resists change and innovation.

Practical Exercises for Formandi

1. Public Speaking Practice

- Assign short reflections or readings during liturgy.
- Hold “formation conferences” where each formandus prepares and delivers a short talk.
- Provide gentle, constructive feedback.

2. Conflict Role-Plays

- Pair up formandus groups to enact a realistic community conflict scenario.
- Practice identifying needs, expressing feelings respectfully, finding shared solutions.
- Debrief as a group on strategies that worked.

3. Leadership Rotation

- Assign rotating roles for prayer planning, service coordination, meeting facilitation.
- Discuss challenges and learning in accompaniment sessions.

4. Non-Violent Communication Workshop

- Teach 4 steps: Observation, Feeling, Need, Request.
- Practice in pairs:
 - “When I see/hear ___, I feel ___ because I need ___. Would you be willing to ___?”

5. Team Project

- Organize a group service or creative project.
- Assign shared responsibility for planning, execution, and evaluation.
- Reflect on collaboration afterward.

6. Relationship Review

- Journaling prompt:
 - “Which relationships in community give me life? Which drain me? Why?”
 - “How can I improve or repair them?”
- Optional accompaniment sharing.

Questions for Accompaniment

- *When do you feel confident communicating with others? When is it hard?*
- *How do you typically respond to conflict?*
- *What kind of leader do you want to be?*
- *How do you handle criticism or disagreement?*
- *What do you value in teamwork? How do you contribute?*

Group Discussion Ideas

- *Share a time you felt truly heard and respected. What made it effective?*
- *Why is conflict sometimes avoided in religious life? How can we approach it better?*
- *What makes a leader trustworthy?*
- *How can we foster a more collaborative spirit in our community?*

Spiritual Reflection

What Does Scripture Say?

Healthy relationships lie at the heart of Christian discipleship. Scripture repeatedly calls believers to communicate truthfully, reconcile conflicts, encourage one another, and build communities marked by peace.

Jesus teaches: “**Blessed are the peacemakers.**” (Matthew 5:9). Peace-making requires communication, humility, and courage.

St. Paul advises: **“Speak the truth in love.”** (Ephesians 4:15). Truth and charity must always remain together. Again, he writes: **“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building others up.”** (Ephesians 4:29). Words should heal rather than wound. The Letter to the Colossians concludes: **“Let your conversation always be full of grace.”** (Colossians 4:6). Christian communication reflects the gentleness and wisdom of Christ.

Formation Insight: Every conversation offers an opportunity either to build communion or to weaken it. Missionaries are called to become builders of bridges, reconciliation, and hope.

Gospel Scenes for Meditation

Jesus and the Pharisees’ Traps (Mk 12:13–17)

- Calm, wise, respectful but clear communication.

Jesus’ Questions about Authority (Mt 21:23–27)

- Strategic, honest, and creative dialogue.

Jesus Knows Hearts (Jn 2:25; Lk 6:8)

- Deep awareness of others’ motives and needs.

The Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:7–26)

- Skilful, respectful conversation that leads to transformation.

Prayer Exercise

“Lord Jesus,
Teach me to speak truth in love.
Help me to listen with compassion,
Lead with humility,
Resolve conflicts with peace,
And build bonds of trust and service.
Make me an instrument of your reconciling love.
Amen.”

Formator’s Takeaway

Social skills are the means by which love becomes action and community becomes communion.

Your role as formator:

- Provide safe spaces for practicing communication, leadership, and conflict management.
- Offer feedback that is specific, kind, and growth-oriented.
- Model what it means to listen well, speak clearly, lead humbly, and collaborate generously.
- Foster a community culture where differences are respected, conflicts are resolved justly, and everyone’s voice is valued.

Integrating Emotional Intelligence (EI) in Formation Programs

Emotional Intelligence is not a separate subject tacked onto formation. It needs to be **woven into the very fabric** of daily life in the house or seminary.

Below are practical strategies for formators to **embed, connect, and evaluate** EI development as a normal, expected part of formation.

1. Embed EI Development into Daily Routines

Emotional growth happens not just in classes or special workshops but through **daily practices** that cultivate awareness, reflection, and connection.

Morning Reflections with Emotional Check-Ins

- Begin communal prayer or meditation with 1–2 minutes of silence focused on noticing feelings:
 - *“What am I feeling as I begin this day?”*
 - *“What might these feelings tell me about my needs or challenges today?”*
- Invite voluntary sharing (if appropriate):
 - *“I’m feeling anxious about my role in liturgy.”*
 - *“I feel grateful for yesterday’s conversation.”*

Formator Tip: Model openness yourself. Normalize naming emotions without judgment.

Weekly Group Sharing Circles

- Hold structured, safe spaces for group sharing:
 - Emotional highs and lows of the week.
 - Challenges in community life.
 - Moments of growth or learning.
- Establish ground rules:
 - Confidentiality.
 - Listening without interrupting.
 - Speaking from one’s own experience.

Formator Tip: Facilitate with empathy. Draw quieter members gently into the circle. Teach respectful feedback.

Personalized Accompaniment Sessions with EI Focus

- Make emotional self-awareness and regulation a regular topic in spiritual direction or formation meetings:
 - *“How have you handled anger this month?”*
 - *“What feedback did you receive? How did you respond?”*
- Help formandi identify emotional patterns and set goals for growth.

Formator Tip: Be gentle but honest. Encourage accountability while affirming progress.

2. Link EI Growth with Spiritual Formation

Emotional development is deeply spiritual. Formation should help formandi see that **emotions are part of their relationship with God and others.**

Lectio Divina on Gospel Scenes Illustrating EI

- Choose passages where Jesus models EI:
 - His compassion for the sick.
 - His anger in the temple.
 - His calm during interrogation.
 - His tears over Jerusalem.
- Guide reflection:
 - *“What emotions is Jesus expressing?”*
 - *“How does he regulate them?”*
 - *“What does this teach me about my own emotional life?”*

Formator Tip: Encourage journaling insights. Invite group sharing of spiritual insights.

Personal Prayer on One's Emotions and Motivations

- Suggest that formandi bring their emotions into personal prayer:
 - Naming them before God.
 - Asking for understanding and healing.
 - Praying for grace to respond well.
- Encourage use of Psalms as models of honest emotional prayer.

Formator Tip: Offer prayer exercises:

- “Lord, help me see what I’m really feeling.”
- “Teach me to respond with love.”

3. Evaluate Regularly

Formation should not just teach about EI—it should **assess and support growth over time**.

Use Positive/Negative Indicators in Reviews

- Incorporate EI indicators (as listed for each competency) into regular evaluations:
 - “Is this formandus able to name and express emotions?”
 - “How does he handle criticism?”
 - “Does he empathize with others?”
- Make these indicators clear at the start so expectations are shared.

Formator Tip: Balance honesty with encouragement. Name strengths as well as areas to grow.

Encourage Peer Feedback with Guidelines for Respect and Honesty

- Teach formandi how to give constructive feedback:
 - “I noticed you seemed upset yesterday. Are you okay?”
 - “I appreciated how you mediated that conflict.”
- Create structured times for peer feedback.
- Emphasize safety, respect, and learning—not judgment.

Formator Tip: Model giving and receiving feedback gracefully.

4. Integrating All Levels of Formation

- **Initial Formation:** Focus on self-awareness, basic regulation, respectful communication.
- **Middle Stages:** Add conflict management, leadership, cultural sensitivity.
- **Final Preparation:** Emphasize mentoring skills, community building, resilience in ministry.

5. Conclusion for Formators

“The glory of God is man fully alive.” – St. Irenaeus

Formation is about *making disciples* who are **fully alive**—spiritually rooted, emotionally mature, socially skilled.

Emotional Intelligence is **essential** for:

Holistic Formation

- It integrates intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social growth.
- **Credible Gospel Witness:** Emotionally mature ministers embody Christ’s compassion, patience, and wisdom.

- **Joyful Religious Life:** Healthy emotional lives support lasting vocation, community life, and mission.

Your Role as Formator

Be an Example

- Show emotional honesty and humility.
- Model empathy, calm conflict management, joyful leadership.

Offer Clear Guidance

- Teach EI competencies explicitly.
- Provide tools, frameworks, and spiritual practices.

Create Space for Growth

- Foster safe, trusting relationships in the formation house.
- Make room for vulnerability and learning.

Challenge and Accompany with Compassion

- Call formandi to greater self-awareness and accountability.
- Do so gently, patiently, and consistently.

Your Mission

Together with your fellow formators, your task is to **help formandi become spiritually, emotionally, and socially mature—ready to serve with love.**

- They will lead people of God with wisdom and empathy.
- They will build communities of trust and hope.
- They will proclaim the Gospel with credibility and joy.

Formation is not just about what they know. It is about who they are becoming.

Conclusion

Emotional Intelligence is not simply another topic in formation; it is an essential part of becoming a mature missionary. As formandi grow in self-awareness, emotional balance, empathy, and healthy relationships, they become better prepared to live in community, accompany others with compassion, exercise responsible leadership, and proclaim the Gospel with credibility and joy.

For this reason, formators are invited to make these competencies part of their own lives before teaching them to others. The most effective formation comes not only from what formators say, but from the way they listen, communicate, resolve conflicts, and accompany those entrusted to their care. Emotional Intelligence is learned as much through witness as through instruction.

The strategies, exercises, and assessment tools presented in this module are practical resources to support this journey. Rather than applying them mechanically, formators should learn to use them confidently and adapt them to the age, maturity, personality, culture, and stage of formation of each formandus. What is appropriate in the initial stages of formation may need to be deepened or modified as the person grows towards perpetual commitment and missionary leadership.

Ultimately, the growth of Emotional Intelligence is also the work of the Holy Spirit. As formators create environments of trust, reflection, prayer, and accompaniment, they cooperate with God's grace in shaping missionaries whose hearts, minds, and relationships reflect those of Christ.

May this module help formators accompany others with greater wisdom, compassion, and confidence, forming **mystics enflamed in mission** who witness to the Gospel through the integrity of their lives as much as through the words they proclaim.