

INTEGRATION OF MASCULINE AND FEMININE QUALITIES IN MISSIONARY FORMATION

Introduction: Why Balanced Growth Matters in Missionary Formation

Every missionary is called to become more like Christ, not only through prayer, study, and apostolic work, but also through continual human growth. Formation is therefore much more than acquiring knowledge or developing pastoral skills. It is a lifelong journey of becoming a mature, integrated person who can love deeply, serve generously, and remain faithful in the joys and challenges of mission.

Experience shows that missionaries often develop certain strengths more naturally than others. Some are decisive, organized, and ready to take responsibility, yet may struggle to listen patiently or express their emotions. Others are warm, compassionate, and attentive to people, yet may find it difficult to make firm decisions, set healthy boundaries, or address conflicts directly. Neither tendency is wrong. Both reveal important gifts that need to be nurtured and balanced.

Healthy missionary formation seeks to bring these complementary qualities into harmony. A mature missionary learns to combine courage with compassion, conviction with openness, leadership with collaboration, discipline with flexibility, and strength with tenderness. Such integration enables a person to respond wisely to the diverse situations encountered in community life, pastoral ministry, and personal relationships.

This module uses the language of **masculine** and **feminine** qualities to describe these complementary human capacities. These terms do **not** refer to gender roles or stereotypes. Rather, they describe qualities that every person, man or woman, is called to develop. Every missionary needs both the ability to take initiative and the capacity to listen deeply; both the courage to speak the truth and the humility to receive others; both clear direction and compassionate presence.

Psychologists, especially Carl Jung, have described these complementary dimensions as “masculine” and “feminine” polarities within every person. While this psychological perspective provides a helpful framework, this module is primarily concerned with formation. Its focus is not on mastering psychological theory but on helping formandusi become balanced, emotionally mature, spiritually grounded, and pastorally effective disciples of Christ.

Jesus Himself offers the perfect model of this integration. He spoke with authority yet welcomed the little ones. He confronted injustice with courage yet wept with those who suffered. He led His disciples with clarity while remaining deeply attentive to each person He encountered. In Him, strength and tenderness, justice and mercy, conviction and compassion come together in perfect harmony.

The purpose of this module is to help formators accompany formandusi toward this same human and spiritual maturity. Through reflection, practical exercises, community experiences, and personal accompaniment, it invites each person to recognize both their strengths and their areas for growth, so that they may become missionaries who lead with wisdom, love with authenticity, and serve with the heart of Christ.

Note for Formators

This module is **not** intended to classify or label formandusi as “masculine” or “feminine.” Rather, it offers a practical framework for observing patterns of behaviour and identifying areas that may need further growth. The aim is to help formandusi develop a balanced personality that is emotionally healthy, spiritually mature, and capable of responding creatively and compassionately to the demands of missionary life.

Throughout this module, encourage formandusi to reflect on their daily experiences in community, prayer, ministry, and relationships. Real growth occurs not by trying to become someone

else, but by allowing God's grace to gradually integrate every dimension of one's personality into the likeness of Christ.

I. Understanding Complementary Human Qualities

Every person is a unique gift of God, created with many different capacities that enable them to love, grow, and serve. Some of these capacities help us to act with confidence and purpose; others help us to build relationships, listen deeply, and care for others. Human maturity is not achieved by developing only one set of qualities while neglecting the other. Rather, it comes from learning to integrate both in a balanced and life-giving way.

In this module, these complementary capacities are described as **masculine** and **feminine** qualities. These terms are used as a practical framework for understanding human growth. They do **not** refer to gender, personality types, or social roles. Every person, regardless of being male or female, possesses both sets of qualities and is called to develop them throughout life.

For example, a missionary may need firmness when making an important community decision, but compassion when accompanying a confrere who is struggling. During a parish mission, one may need clear leadership to organize activities, while also being attentive to the fears, hopes, and needs of the people being served. Mature missionary life requires both capacities.

1. Qualities That Give Direction

These qualities help a person move forward with purpose and responsibility. They enable missionaries to make decisions, persevere through difficulties, and remain faithful to their vocation. Some of these qualities include:

- Taking initiative instead of waiting for others.
- Making responsible decisions.
- Setting healthy boundaries.
- Working with discipline and perseverance.
- Remaining calm during difficulties.
- Taking responsibility for one's actions.
- Leading others with confidence and integrity.

These qualities provide stability and direction for personal life, community living, and apostolic mission.

Formation Example

A formandus is appointed to coordinate the community liturgy. He prepares the schedule well, delegates responsibilities, and ensures that everything is ready on time. His ability to organize helps the community pray peacefully and without confusion. His initiative becomes a service to everyone.

2. Qualities That Build Relationships

These qualities help a person connect with others in a genuine and compassionate way. They foster empathy, openness, flexibility, and the ability to accompany people in their joys and struggles. Some of these qualities include:

- Listening with patience and respect.
- Recognizing and expressing emotions appropriately.
- Showing empathy and compassion.
- Being flexible when situations change.
- Welcoming different opinions.
- Building trust and collaboration.

- Remaining open to God's surprising ways of acting.

These qualities create an atmosphere where people feel accepted, understood, and encouraged to grow.

Formation Example

A novice notices that one of his companions has become unusually quiet after receiving difficult news from home. Instead of offering quick advice, he simply spends time listening, prays with him, and encourages him to share his feelings with the formator. His compassionate presence becomes a source of healing and support.

3. Why Both Are Necessary

Missionary life constantly invites us to move between action and reflection, leadership and collaboration, speaking and listening, planning and adapting. Relying exclusively on one set of qualities can create imbalance. For example:

- A missionary who is highly organized but lacks empathy may accomplish many tasks while unintentionally hurting relationships.
- A missionary who is deeply compassionate but avoids making difficult decisions may create a pleasant atmosphere but allow problems to remain unresolved.
- A community superior who always gives instructions but never listens may discourage participation.
- A formator who only listens but hesitates to offer guidance may fail to help the formee grow.

Human maturity develops when these complementary qualities work together. Firmness becomes more credible when it is expressed with kindness. Compassion becomes more effective when it is accompanied by wisdom and clear judgment.

Psychological Perspective

Psychologists have long observed that every person possesses complementary ways of relating to themselves, to others, and to the world. Carl Jung described these as masculine and feminine dimensions within each individual. His contribution reminds us that authentic growth involves integrating these complementary capacities rather than overdeveloping one while neglecting the other.

For the purposes of formation, it is not necessary to master Jung's theory. What is important is recognizing that every missionary is invited to grow in both strength and compassion, both responsibility and sensitivity, both clarity and openness.

Biblical Perspective

Sacred Scripture presents many examples of this balanced way of living.

Jesus was decisive when He called His disciples and confronted injustice, yet He was deeply compassionate toward the sick, the poor, and sinners. He spoke the truth with courage while welcoming everyone with mercy.

Likewise, Mary showed profound openness to God's will at the Annunciation while demonstrating remarkable courage by remaining faithful beneath the Cross. She teaches us that genuine strength and deep tenderness belong together.

These biblical examples remind us that Christian maturity is not about becoming more "masculine" or more "feminine." It is about becoming more like Christ, whose humanity reveals the perfect harmony of strength and love.

Note for Formators

Avoid presenting these qualities as fixed personality traits. Instead, invite formandusi to reflect on concrete situations in their daily life. Ask questions such as:

- When do you naturally take initiative?
- When do you find it difficult to listen?
- How do you respond when someone disagrees with you?
- Do you tend to avoid difficult conversations or face them too quickly?
- In what situations do you feel God inviting you to grow?

The goal is not to decide whether a formee is “more masculine” or “more feminine.” The goal is to help each person discover how God is gradually shaping them into a balanced, compassionate, and responsible missionary disciple.

II. Growing Toward Balance: The Call to Integration

The goal of missionary formation is not simply to develop good qualities but to help each person become a balanced and integrated disciple of Christ. Human growth does not happen by strengthening only one aspect of our personality while neglecting another. Rather, it involves learning when to be firm and when to be gentle, when to lead and when to follow, when to speak and when to listen.

An integrated person is able to draw upon different human qualities according to the needs of the situation. This flexibility is a sign of maturity. It reflects inner freedom rather than rigid habits or automatic reactions.

For example, a missionary may need courage to defend the rights of the poor, but also patience to accompany people who are not yet ready for change. A community superior may have to make difficult decisions, yet do so with humility and compassion. A formator may need to correct a formee while ensuring that the correction strengthens rather than discourages him.

Integration, therefore, is not about becoming “half masculine and half feminine.” Nor does it mean displaying every quality equally at all times. Rather, it means having the inner freedom to respond appropriately, guided by wisdom, charity, and the Holy Spirit.

1. What Does an Integrated Missionary Look Like?

An integrated missionary gradually develops the ability to:

- combine conviction with humility.
- take initiative while remaining open to collaboration.
- make decisions without becoming controlling.
- listen deeply without becoming passive.
- express emotions honestly without being dominated by them.
- persevere through difficulties without becoming rigid.
- care for others without neglecting personal responsibility.
- remain faithful to prayer while actively engaging in mission.

These qualities enable missionaries to live with greater inner peace, healthier relationships, and more fruitful apostolic service.

Formation Experience

A young missionary is asked to coordinate a youth programme in the parish. Initially, he wants to do everything himself because he fears the programme may fail. After discussing the situation with his formator, he learns to involve other community members, listen to their suggestions, and delegate

responsibilities. The programme becomes more successful, not because he worked harder, but because he learned to combine leadership with collaboration.

2. Obstacles to Integration

Every person brings into formation a unique personal history. Family experiences, culture, education, previous relationships, and life events all influence the way one responds to people and situations. As a result, some qualities naturally become stronger while others remain less developed. For example:

- Someone raised in a highly demanding environment may become responsible and disciplined but struggle to express emotions.
- Someone who has always been protected by others may find it difficult to make independent decisions.
- A person who has experienced rejection may avoid conflict in order to gain acceptance.
- Another who has often been criticised may become defensive whenever receiving correction.

Formation is not about judging these patterns but understanding them. Greater self-awareness allows the formee to cooperate more freely with God's grace in the work of personal transformation.

3. Integration Is a Lifelong Journey

Personal integration does not happen overnight. It is a gradual process that continues throughout life. Every new assignment, community, ministry, success, disappointment, and crisis becomes an opportunity for further growth. This journey requires:

- honest self-reflection.
- openness to feedback.
- willingness to learn from mistakes.
- regular spiritual accompaniment.
- trust in God's transforming grace.

Rather than seeking perfection, missionaries are invited to become more authentic each day, allowing every experience to shape them into more mature disciples. As St. Paul reminds us: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). True integration is ultimately the work of Christ within us.

4. The Role of the Formator

The formator accompanies this journey with patience, wisdom, and hope. His task is not to change the personality of the formee, but to help him recognize both his gifts and his areas for growth. This involves:

- creating an atmosphere of trust.
- encouraging honest self-reflection.
- helping the formee identify recurring patterns.
- affirming strengths while gently challenging limitations.
- connecting daily experiences with personal and spiritual growth.
- reminding the formee that growth is gradual and supported by God's grace.

The formator's attitude should always communicate: *"I am walking with you, not judging you."*

Formation Experience

During community meetings, a formee rarely expresses his opinion. When asked privately, he admits that he fears saying something wrong. Rather than immediately encouraging him to speak more, the formator first explores the roots of this fear. Together they decide on a simple goal: at each community meeting he will contribute at least one thoughtful observation. Over several months his confidence grows, and he gradually becomes an active and valued participant in community dialogue.

Reflection Questions

Take a few moments to reflect on the following:

- Which qualities come most naturally to me?
- Which qualities do I find more difficult to develop?
- How do I usually react when I am under pressure?
- In what situations do I need greater courage?
- In what situations do I need greater patience and compassion?
- What might God be inviting me to develop at this stage of my formation?

Note for Formators

Avoid expecting immediate change. Personal integration develops slowly through repeated experiences, prayer, reflection, accompaniment, and community life. Instead of trying to correct every weakness, help the formee focus on one or two concrete areas of growth at a time. Small, consistent steps usually lead to deeper and more lasting transformation than attempting too many changes at once.

III. Recognising Patterns of Growth: Signs of Balance and Imbalance

As missionaries grow in their vocation, they gradually develop habits of thinking, relating, praying, and serving. Some of these habits promote personal maturity and healthy relationships, while others may limit growth if they remain unnoticed.

This section is not meant to label or judge people. Rather, it helps formandusi and formators recognize patterns that can become starting points for deeper reflection and accompaniment. Every person shows signs of both strength and limitation. The important question is not, “*Am I balanced?*” but “*Where is God inviting me to grow?*”

A. Signs of Healthy Integration

A missionary who is growing toward balance gradually shows many of the following qualities.

1. Balanced Decision-Making

An integrated person is able to think carefully before acting. Decisions are guided by both reason and compassion. Typical signs include:

- Makes decisions prayerfully rather than impulsively.
- Listens to others before reaching conclusions.
- Is able to make difficult decisions when necessary.
- Accepts responsibility for decisions made.
- Learns from mistakes instead of becoming discouraged.

Formation Experience: A formandus is responsible for assigning community chores. Two brothers request easier responsibilities because of personal difficulties. Instead of immediately saying yes or no, he listens to both, consults the formator, considers the needs of the whole community, and then

makes a fair decision. Everyone may not be fully satisfied, but they recognize that the decision was thoughtful and respectful.

2. Emotional Maturity

Integrated missionaries recognize their emotions without allowing emotions to control them. Typical signs include:

- Expresses feelings honestly and respectfully.
- Handles disappointment without losing hope.
- Receives correction without becoming defensive.
- Recognizes personal limitations.
- Seeks help when needed.

Formation Experience: A seminarian receives feedback that his preaching needs improvement. His first reaction is disappointment. After reflecting and discussing it with his spiritual director, he accepts the feedback positively and begins practising regularly. Over time, his confidence and competence grow.

3. Healthy Relationships

Balanced missionaries build relationships marked by trust, respect, and appropriate boundaries. Typical signs include:

- Listens attentively to others.
- Appreciates different opinions.
- Can work well in a team.
- Respects personal boundaries.
- Is able to both give and receive support.

Formation Experience: Two novices disagree during a group assignment. Instead of avoiding each other, they meet, discuss the misunderstanding calmly, apologise where necessary, and continue working together. The disagreement becomes an opportunity for growth rather than division.

4. Balanced Leadership

Leadership in missionary life is service rather than control. An integrated leader:

- encourages participation.
- delegates responsibilities.
- remains approachable.
- corrects with respect.
- leads by personal example.

Formation Experience: A community coordinator notices that one brother is struggling with punctuality. Instead of publicly criticising him, he meets him privately, listens to the reasons behind the behaviour, agrees on practical steps for improvement, and continues to encourage him. Firmness is combined with respect and care.

5. Spiritual Balance

Human maturity and spiritual maturity grow together. A balanced missionary:

- remains faithful to personal prayer.
- trusts God during uncertainty.
- serves generously without neglecting rest.

- allows prayer to influence daily decisions.
- remains hopeful during difficulties.

Prayer is not separated from daily life but becomes the source of strength for mission.

B. Common Signs That May Need Attention

Everyone experiences moments of imbalance. Stress, fatigue, disappointment, or unresolved personal struggles can influence behaviour. The following patterns are not permanent characteristics but invitations for growth.

1. Excessive Need for Control

A person may:

- insist that everything be done their own way.
- find it difficult to delegate.
- become impatient with slower people.
- struggle to admit mistakes.

Example: A formandus insists on preparing every community activity himself because he believes no one else can do it properly. Eventually he becomes exhausted, while other community members feel excluded and unappreciated.

Growth Opportunity: Learn to trust others, delegate responsibilities, and value collaboration.

2. Difficulty Taking Responsibility

A person may:

- avoid making decisions.
- wait for others to solve problems.
- fear taking initiative.
- become dependent on constant reassurance.

Example: A novice repeatedly asks permission for even the smallest decisions because he fears making mistakes. Gradually, the formator encourages him to make simple decisions independently and reflect on the outcomes.

Growth Opportunity: Develop confidence, initiative, and responsible freedom.

3. Emotional Imbalance

A person may:

- suppress emotions completely.
- react impulsively.
- become easily discouraged.
- withdraw from relationships after conflict.

Example: After receiving fraternal correction, a brother isolates himself for several days and stops participating in community recreation. During accompaniment he realizes that criticism reminds him of painful childhood experiences. Recognising this pattern becomes the beginning of healing.

Growth Opportunity: Learn healthier ways of expressing and processing emotions.

4. Relational Difficulties

A person may:

- avoid conflict at all costs.
- seek constant approval.
- struggle to trust others.
- dominate conversations.
- find it difficult to forgive.

Example: During community meetings, one brother rarely shares his ideas because he worries that others may disagree with him. Through regular encouragement and small opportunities to contribute, he gradually develops greater confidence.

Growth Opportunity: Build healthy communication, mutual trust, and emotional security.

C. Looking Beyond Behaviour

Behaviour tells only part of the story. Two people may act in similar ways for very different reasons. For example:

- A quiet person may be reflective—or fearful.
- A very active person may be enthusiastic—or avoiding personal struggles.
- Someone who always helps others may be generous—or unable to set healthy boundaries.

For this reason, formators should avoid making quick judgments. Their task is to understand what lies beneath the behaviour through respectful dialogue, careful observation, and patient accompaniment. As Jesus reminds us: “Every good tree bears good fruit” (Matthew 7:17).

Formation seeks not merely to change behaviour but to nurture the inner life from which healthy behaviour naturally grows.

Guidelines for Formators

When observing a formee, ask yourself:

- What strengths do I consistently notice?
- Which behaviours seem to repeat themselves?
- In what situations do these patterns appear?
- What might be the deeper need or fear behind this behaviour?
- How can I accompany this person toward greater freedom rather than simply correcting the behaviour?

Remember that growth takes time. Lasting transformation occurs when the formee feels understood, challenged appropriately, and supported by the grace of God. The role of the formator is to accompany this process with patience, wisdom, and hope.

IV. Self-Reflection and Personal Assessment

Growth begins with self-awareness. Before a missionary can grow in balance and maturity, he or she must first recognize personal strengths, recurring patterns, and areas that need further development. This self-assessment is not an examination to be passed or failed. Rather, it is a tool for prayerful reflection and honest conversation with a formator or spiritual director.

Every person has qualities that come naturally and others that require conscious effort to develop. Some are naturally decisive and organized, while others excel in listening and building

relationships. The purpose of this assessment is not to determine whether one is “more masculine” or “more feminine.” Instead, it helps identify how well these complementary qualities are being integrated in everyday life.

The most valuable outcome of this exercise is not the score itself but the conversation and personal reflection that follow.

Instructions

Read each statement carefully and rate yourself honestly using the following scale:

Rating	Meaning
1	Rarely true of me
2	Occasionally true
3	Sometimes true
4	Usually true
5	Consistently true

Respond according to how you normally behave rather than how you would like to behave.

A. Responsibility and Initiative

Rate each statement from 1–5.

Statement	Rating
I take initiative when I see something that needs to be done.	
I complete my responsibilities faithfully.	
I remain calm when facing difficulties or pressure.	
I can make decisions without unnecessary delay.	
I set healthy boundaries when needed.	
I persevere even when tasks become difficult.	

B. Relationships and Compassion

Statement	Rating
I listen attentively without interrupting others.	
I can express my emotions honestly and respectfully.	
I try to understand another person’s point of view.	
I adapt well when plans unexpectedly change.	
I am comfortable asking for help when needed.	
I show patience toward people who struggle.	

C. Balance in Daily Living

Statement	Rating
I know when to lead and when to support others.	
I can be firm without becoming harsh.	
I can be compassionate without avoiding difficult conversations.	
I balance prayer, work, rest, and relationships in a healthy way.	
I learn from criticism instead of becoming discouraged.	
I try to grow from both successes and failures.	

Reflecting on Your Responses

After completing the assessment, take time to prayerfully reflect.

Ask yourself:

- Which statements received my highest scores?
- Which statements were most difficult to affirm?
- What patterns do I notice?
- Which qualities come naturally to me?
- Which qualities need greater attention?
- What recent experiences confirm these observations?
- Where do I sense God inviting me to grow?

Remember that everyone has strengths and limitations. Becoming aware of them is the first step toward lasting growth.

Formation Experience

A formandus completed this assessment and discovered that he consistently rated himself highly in responsibility and organization but very low in listening and expressing emotions. During accompaniment, he realized that he often focused so much on completing tasks that he overlooked the needs of his companions.

Rather than trying to change everything at once, he chose one concrete goal for the next two months: before offering solutions, he would first listen attentively and ask at least two questions to understand the other person's experience. At the next review, both he and his formator noticed significant improvement in his relationships.

Another novice found that he scored highly in empathy and kindness but struggled with making decisions and setting boundaries. Together with his formator, he accepted small leadership responsibilities within the community. Gradually, his confidence increased without losing his natural compassion.

These examples remind us that growth usually happens through small, consistent steps rather than dramatic changes.

Personal Growth Plan

After reflecting on your assessment, complete the following.

My greatest strengths are:

The one quality I most need to develop is:

One concrete situation where I will practise this quality during the coming month is:

How will I know that I am growing?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You know me completely. You have gifted me with many strengths and continue to call me toward greater maturity. Give me the humility to recognize my limitations, the courage to grow beyond them, and the grace to become more like You each day. Teach me to lead with wisdom, to love with compassion, and to serve with a generous and integrated heart. Amen.

Note for Formators: Encourage formandusi not to focus on the numerical scores. The real value of this exercise lies in the conversation that follows. During accompaniment, invite them to identify **one**

or two realistic goals rather than trying to improve everything at once. Review these goals periodically and celebrate even small signs of growth. Consistent encouragement and patient accompaniment foster deeper transformation than repeated criticism.

V. Accompanying Formandusi Toward Balanced Growth: A Practical Guide for Formators

The role of a formator is not to analyse personalities or diagnose psychological patterns. Rather, it is to accompany each formee with patience, wisdom, and respect, helping him recognize both the gifts God has given him and the areas where further growth is needed.

This module is not intended to place formandusi into categories such as “strong” or “weak,” “masculine” or “feminine.” Instead, it offers a practical way of observing how a person responds to daily life and how those responses can become opportunities for deeper human, spiritual, and missionary growth.

The formator’s task is to help the formee become a more integrated disciple of Christ—someone who is responsible yet compassionate, confident yet humble, decisive yet attentive to others.

a. How to Use This Module

This module is most effective when used over several accompaniment sessions rather than in a single class. A suggested process is:

Step 1: Personal Reading

Invite the formee to read one section at a time. Encourage slow reading and personal reflection rather than rushing to complete the module.

Step 2: Personal Reflection

Ask the formee to reflect on questions such as:

- Which qualities describe me best?
- Which qualities are more difficult for me?
- Which recent experiences confirm these observations?

Step 3: Complete the Self-Assessment

The assessment should become the starting point for dialogue rather than the conclusion.

Step 4: Personal Accompaniment

During accompaniment, focus on one or two concrete areas for growth. Avoid discussing too many weaknesses at the same time.

Step 5: Review Progress

After several weeks, revisit the agreed goals. Celebrate progress. Discuss difficulties honestly. Adjust goals when necessary. Growth in formation is gradual.

b. What Should the Formator Observe?

Rather than looking only at external behaviour, observe how the formee responds in different areas of formation.

In Community Life

Observe whether the formee:

- participates willingly in community life.
- accepts responsibilities.
- collaborates with others.
- listens respectfully.
- handles disagreements constructively.
- contributes to a positive community atmosphere.

Formation Experience: A novice willingly accepts every assigned task but becomes irritated whenever another brother works more slowly. Although responsible, he still needs to grow in patience and teamwork.

In Prayer

Observe whether the formee:

- remains faithful to personal prayer.
- prays only when emotionally motivated or also through periods of dryness.
- allows prayer to influence daily decisions.
- shows openness to God's guidance.

Formation Experience: A seminarian faithfully attends community prayer but rarely spends time in personal silence. During accompaniment he realizes that he often stays busy because silence brings unresolved emotions to the surface. Learning to remain quietly before the Lord becomes an important step in his growth.

In Ministry

Observe whether the formee:

- takes initiative.
- serves generously.
- relates respectfully to people.
- adapts when plans change.
- works collaboratively with others.

Formation Experience: During a parish youth programme, one brother organizes every activity efficiently but pays little attention to the young people themselves. Another spends hours talking with the youth but forgets practical responsibilities. Both are invited to develop greater balance.

In Difficult Situations

Pay special attention to how the formee reacts under pressure. Does he:

- become controlling?
- withdraw from others?
- avoid responsibility?
- become defensive?
- remain calm and open to dialogue?

Stress often reveals patterns that remain hidden during ordinary circumstances.

c. Helpful Questions During Accompaniment

Good accompaniment depends more on listening than on giving advice. Questions such as these often encourage deeper reflection:

- What recent experience has helped you grow the most?
- What situations make you feel uncomfortable?
- How do you usually respond when someone corrects you?
- What is most difficult for you in community life?
- When do you feel most alive in your vocation?
- What qualities do you admire in other missionaries?
- What qualities do you hope God will develop in you?

These questions invite reflection rather than self-defence.

d. Helping Formandusi Grow

Once a pattern has been identified, the formator can suggest simple and realistic practices.

Area for Growth	Practical Suggestions
Difficulty taking initiative	Give small leadership responsibilities with regular encouragement.
Tendency to dominate	Encourage attentive listening before offering opinions.
Fear of conflict	Practise respectful conversations about small disagreements.
Difficulty expressing emotions	Encourage journaling, spiritual direction, or regular personal sharing.
Weak boundaries	Help the formee learn to say “yes” and “no” appropriately.
Rigidity	Invite participation in activities requiring teamwork and flexibility.

Growth occurs through repeated practice rather than occasional good intentions.

e. Group Formation Activity

Learning from Real Experiences

Once a month, invite a small group of formandusi to reflect on a recent community or pastoral experience. Possible questions include:

- Describe a situation where you had to make a difficult decision.
- Describe a situation where listening carefully changed the outcome.
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Where did you experience God’s presence?

The purpose is not to evaluate success or failure but to help formandusi recognize how God continues to shape them through everyday experiences.

f. Common Mistakes to Avoid

Formators should avoid:

- labelling people too quickly.
- comparing one formee with another.
- interpreting every behaviour psychologically.

- expecting rapid change.
- correcting weaknesses without acknowledging strengths.

Likewise, formandusi should avoid:

- becoming discouraged by their limitations.
- comparing themselves with others.
- trying to change too many things at once.
- confusing temporary struggles with permanent weaknesses.

Christian formation is always rooted in hope. God's grace works patiently within each person.

Example

A formator notices that a young religious is becoming increasingly quiet during community meetings. Rather than concluding that he lacks interest, the formator meets him privately. The formee shares that he feels intimidated by older members and fears saying something foolish.

Together they agree on a simple goal: at each meeting he will contribute one thoughtful observation. Over the following months, his confidence grows naturally. The change comes not through pressure but through patient accompaniment and encouragement.

Note for Formators

The most effective accompaniment does not focus primarily on correcting weaknesses. It begins by recognizing the gifts already present in the formee and then helping those gifts mature through experience, reflection, prayer, and feedback.

Always remember that people grow best when they feel accepted, understood, and gently challenged. Your role is not to produce perfect missionaries but to accompany persons who are gradually allowing Christ to shape every dimension of their lives.

VI. Biblical Foundations: Growing into the Fullness of Christ

The goal of missionary formation is not simply to become more efficient, emotionally balanced, or psychologically mature. Its deepest purpose is to become more like Jesus Christ. He is the perfect model of integrated humanity, revealing what it means to live with both strength and tenderness, conviction and compassion, courage and humility.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus responds to different situations with remarkable wisdom. Sometimes He speaks with firmness; at other times He listens with deep compassion. He knows when to act decisively and when to wait patiently. His life shows that authentic maturity is not about choosing one approach over another but responding to each situation with love and discernment. For missionaries, this means allowing the Gospel—not personality alone—to shape the way we think, relate, pray, and serve.

1. Jesus: The Perfect Model of Human Integration

Jesus reveals that true strength is always united with love.

He was courageous without being aggressive, compassionate without being weak, authoritative without dominating others, and humble without lacking confidence. The following examples illustrate this balance.

Jesus Shows Strength	Jesus Shows Compassion
Calling the disciples to leave everything and follow Him (Mk 1:16–20).	Welcoming children and blessing them (Mk 10:13–16).

Cleansing the Temple (Jn 2:13–17).	Weeping at the death of Lazarus (Jn 11:35).
Challenging hypocrisy among religious leaders (Mt 23).	Forgiving the woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:1–11).
Resolutely setting out for Jerusalem (Lk 9:51).	Feeding the hungry crowds (Mk 6:34–44).
Accepting the Cross with courage (Lk 22–23).	Forgiving His executioners (Lk 23:34).

Jesus teaches us that strength without love becomes harshness, while compassion without truth loses its power to transform. In Him, both qualities are perfectly united.

Formation Experience: A missionary priest has to correct a catechist whose behaviour is causing confusion in the parish. Instead of humiliating him publicly, he meets him privately, explains the problem honestly, listens to his perspective, and offers support for improvement. Like Jesus, he combines truth with charity.

2. Mary: Strength Expressed Through Faith

Mary is often remembered for her gentleness, but the Gospel also reveals her remarkable courage.

She trusted God’s plan even when she did not fully understand it. She accepted uncertainty, accompanied Jesus throughout His mission, remained faithful at the foot of the Cross, and continued supporting the early Church after the Resurrection.

Mary teaches missionaries that genuine strength often appears through faithful perseverance rather than dramatic action.

She reminds us that courage and tenderness belong together.

Reflection: Consider Mary’s words: “Let it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). Her openness to God’s will required enormous courage.

3. St. Paul: Firmness United with Pastoral Care

St. Paul is another excellent model for missionaries. He defended the Gospel with conviction, travelled tirelessly, endured persecution, and established Christian communities across the Roman world.

Yet he also described himself as: “Gentle among you, like a nurse caring for her little children” (1 Thessalonians 2:7).

Paul shows that effective leadership combines clear direction with genuine affection for those entrusted to our care.

4. What Scripture Teaches About Balanced Growth

Throughout the Bible we find complementary qualities that belong together.

- Justice and mercy.
- Truth and love.
- Courage and humility.
- Leadership and service.
- Wisdom and compassion.
- Perseverance and patience.

Christian maturity grows as these qualities become increasingly integrated in daily life. St. Paul expresses this beautifully: “Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). This is the true goal of formation.

5. Bringing Scripture into Daily Formation

The Word of God should become a mirror through which formandusi reflect on their own lives.

A formator may invite a formee to pray with one Gospel passage each week and ask simple questions such as:

- What quality of Jesus stands out to me?
- How did Jesus respond to this situation?
- What challenges me in His response?
- Where do I see this situation in my own life?
- What invitation is God giving me today?

These reflections gradually connect biblical meditation with everyday formation.

Formation Experience: A novice finds it difficult to forgive a brother after a misunderstanding. During spiritual direction, the formator invites him to pray with Jesus washing the feet of His disciples (John 13:1–15). Over several days, he realizes that genuine leadership begins with humble service. This prayer becomes the starting point for reconciliation within the community.

6. The Eucharist: The School of Integration

Every celebration of the Eucharist forms missionaries in balanced living. In the Eucharist we encounter Christ who is:

- strong enough to give His life,
- humble enough to become bread,
- faithful to the Father's will,
- compassionate toward every sinner.

By participating in the Eucharist each day, missionaries gradually learn to offer themselves with the same generous love.

Formation, therefore, is not only about acquiring new skills but about allowing Christ's life to shape our own.

Note for Formators

Encourage formandusi to move beyond simply admiring biblical figures. Help them ask:

- What quality of Christ am I being invited to develop today?
- How can I imitate this attitude in my community, ministry, or prayer?

Scripture becomes transformative when it is connected to concrete experiences of daily life. Encourage formandusi to bring real situations from community, ministry, and personal struggles into their prayer with the Gospel. Over time, they will discover that the deepest integration is not achieved by human effort alone but through a living relationship with Christ, who gradually forms His own heart within them.

VII. Formation Activities for Individuals and Groups

Learning about balanced human growth is only the beginning. True formation takes place when these insights are put into practice in daily life. Community living, prayer, pastoral ministry, and personal accompaniment provide countless opportunities for formandusi to grow in responsibility, compassion, courage, humility, and emotional maturity.

The activities in this section are designed to help formators move beyond classroom teaching. They encourage reflection on real-life experiences so that learning becomes part of everyday missionary life.

A. Personal Reflection Activities

1. Daily Review

At the end of each day, spend a few minutes reflecting on the following questions:

- When did I show responsibility and initiative today?
- When did I show patience and compassion?
- Was there a situation where I reacted too quickly or avoided responsibility?
- What did I learn about myself today?
- Where did I experience God's presence?

This simple practice helps formandusi become more aware of their patterns of behaviour and encourages gradual growth.

2. Gospel Reflection

Choose one Gospel passage each week and observe how Jesus responds to different people.

Ask yourself:

- What attitude of Jesus touches me most?
- What quality do I admire in Him?
- Which aspect of His response challenges me?
- How can I imitate this attitude during the coming week?

The purpose is to allow Scripture to shape everyday behaviour.

3. Personal Growth Journal

Invite formandusi to keep a simple journal. Each week they may write briefly about:

- one experience that helped them grow;
- one situation they found difficult;
- one lesson they learned;
- one practical goal for the coming week.

Over time, this journal becomes a valuable record of personal development.

B. Community Formation Activities

1. Community Reflection Evening

Once each month, dedicate one community meeting to reflecting on personal growth rather than community administration. Possible questions include:

- What has helped me grow during the past month?
- What has been most challenging?
- How has the community supported my growth?
- What quality do I wish to develop next?

The purpose is to create an atmosphere of trust where members can learn from one another.

2. Appreciating One Another's Gifts

Invite each community member to write one strength they appreciate in every other member. The responses are then shared privately.

This activity helps formandusi recognize gifts they may overlook in themselves while strengthening mutual respect within the community.

3. Learning from Community Experiences

Choose a recent community event—for example:

- organising a feast,
- conducting a parish mission,
- receiving visitors,
- preparing a retreat,
- responding to a community conflict.

Discuss together:

- What went well?
- What difficulties emerged?
- How did we respond?
- What helped us work together?
- What can we improve next time?

This encourages learning from real experiences rather than hypothetical situations.

C. Pastoral Learning Activities

Pastoral ministry is one of the best classrooms for human growth.

After every significant ministry experience, invite formandusi to reflect on questions such as:

- Did I listen more than I spoke?
- Did I take appropriate initiative?
- Was I attentive to people's needs?
- How did I respond when plans changed?
- What surprised me?
- What have I learned about myself?

Formation Experience

A seminarian returns from visiting a family that recently lost a loved one. During the visit he realised that people did not expect immediate answers to their questions about suffering. What they valued most was his quiet presence and willingness to listen.

During accompaniment he reflects: "I discovered that sometimes the best ministry is simply to be present."

This insight becomes an important step in his pastoral growth.

D. Role-Play Activities

Simple role-playing exercises help formandusi practise responding to real-life situations. Examples include:

- correcting a brother respectfully;
- resolving a misunderstanding in the community;
- accompanying someone who is discouraged;
- leading a community meeting;

- responding to criticism calmly.

After each role-play, invite participants to discuss:

- What did I do well?
- What could I improve?
- How did the other person feel?
- What would Jesus have done in this situation?

The focus should always be learning rather than evaluating performance.

E. Growth Through Service

Many important qualities develop through ordinary community responsibilities. Encourage formandusi to rotate responsibilities such as:

- coordinating community prayer;
- organising recreation;
- managing household duties;
- preparing liturgical celebrations;
- leading apostolic activities.

After each responsibility, encourage personal reflection:

- What was easy for me?
- What challenged me?
- How did I relate to others?
- What did I discover about myself?

Ordinary responsibilities often reveal hidden strengths and areas that still need growth.

Practical Tips for Formators

These activities are most effective when they are:

- connected to real community experiences;
- followed by personal reflection;
- discussed during accompaniment;
- repeated regularly throughout formation.

Avoid turning every activity into an evaluation. Instead, create an atmosphere where formandusi feel safe to speak honestly about both their successes and their struggles.

Remember that formation is not measured by perfect performance but by gradual growth in freedom, responsibility, and love.

Note for Formators

People grow most deeply through lived experience that is prayerfully reflected upon. Classroom sessions provide important knowledge, but community life, ministry, and personal accompaniment transform that knowledge into wisdom.

Encourage formandusi to see every day as a formation opportunity. Every conversation, every disagreement, every pastoral assignment, every success, and every failure can become a place where Christ continues to shape their hearts. Over time, these ordinary experiences become the most powerful school of missionary maturity.

VIII. Personal Growth Plan and Conclusion

Formation is not completed by reading a module or participating in a workshop. Real growth takes place when new insights are translated into daily attitudes and concrete actions. Every missionary is a work in progress. God patiently shapes each person through prayer, community life, ministry, successes, failures, and the faithful accompaniment of others.

The purpose of this module has been to help formandusi recognize that balanced growth involves developing complementary human qualities. Some of these qualities may already be well developed, while others require greater attention. The important question is not, *“Have I arrived?”* but *“What is God inviting me to become at this stage of my journey?”*

Growth is gradual. Small and consistent changes, lived faithfully each day, often transform a person more deeply than occasional dramatic efforts.

A. My Personal Growth Plan

Choose **one or two areas** that you would like to develop during the next two or three months.

My Strengths

The qualities that God has already developed in me are:

Areas I Want to Develop

The qualities I would like to strengthen are:

- ☐ Taking greater initiative
- ☐ Listening more attentively
- ☐ Expressing my emotions appropriately
- ☐ Being more patient
- ☐ Setting healthy boundaries
- ☐ Making responsible decisions
- ☐ Collaborating better with others
- ☐ Handling conflicts more constructively
- ☐ Becoming more flexible
- ☐ Growing in prayerful discernment
- ☐ Other:

My Concrete Goal

During the next two months I will intentionally practise:

Practical Steps

To help me grow, I will:

-

-

-

People Who Can Help Me

I will seek encouragement and feedback from:

- ☐ My formator
- ☐ Spiritual director
- ☐ Community superior
- ☐ A trusted companion

Name (if appropriate):

Review Date

I will review my progress on:

B. Questions for Ongoing Reflection

At the end of each month, reflect prayerfully on these questions.

- Where have I noticed genuine growth?
- What situations still challenge me?
- Have I become more open to feedback?
- Am I growing in both responsibility and compassion?
- How has my prayer influenced my relationships and ministry?
- What is God inviting me to learn next?

Remember that growth is often easier for others to notice before we notice it ourselves.

C. A Prayer for Growth

Lord Jesus,

You know me better than I know myself.

You have called me to follow You and to become a faithful missionary disciple.

Thank You for the gifts You have placed within me and for the people who help me grow.

Teach me to be courageous when courage is needed and gentle when compassion is called for.

Help me to lead with humility, to listen with an open heart, to speak the truth with love, and to serve others with generosity.

When I become discouraged, remind me that Your grace continues to work within me.

Shape my mind, my heart, and my relationships so that, day by day, I may become more like You.

May my life reflect Your compassion, Your wisdom, Your courage, and Your love.

Amen.

Conclusion

Missionary formation is ultimately a journey toward becoming more like Christ. It is a lifelong process of allowing God's grace to transform every dimension of our lives—our thoughts, emotions, relationships, decisions, prayer, and apostolic service.

Throughout this module, we have explored the importance of developing complementary human qualities that enable us to live and serve with greater balance. Some missionaries naturally excel in taking initiative, organizing, and leading. Others are gifted in listening, accompanying, and building relationships. Both are valuable gifts. Yet the Gospel invites us to grow beyond our natural preferences so that we become capable of responding wisely and lovingly to whatever mission God entrusts to us.

Jesus Christ remains our perfect model. He united strength with tenderness, truth with mercy, leadership with service, and courage with humility. As His disciples, we are called to allow these same qualities to mature within us through prayer, community life, ministry, and faithful accompaniment.

This journey does not seek perfection but integration. We are not trying to become someone else; rather, we are becoming the person God created us to be. As we grow in self-awareness, openness, and trust in God's grace, we become missionaries who are emotionally healthy, spiritually mature, and pastorally effective.

Final Message to Formators

Your presence as a formator is one of the greatest gifts you can offer a young missionary. More than teaching concepts, you accompany persons. More than correcting weaknesses, you help uncover God's work already taking place in their lives.

Use this module as a guide for conversation rather than a textbook to be completed. Encourage reflection more than quick answers. Observe patiently. Listen deeply. Celebrate growth, however small. Above all, help each formee discover that true maturity is not achieved by human effort alone but through a living relationship with Christ.

When formators accompany with wisdom, patience, and hope, they help shape missionaries who are capable of leading with courage, loving with compassion, living joyfully in community, and proclaiming the Gospel with hearts that are fully alive in Christ. Together, this is the path toward authentic missionary holiness.