

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR BEING A CATHOLIC AT WORK

Practice a spirituality of work—this includes an awareness of God's presence at work and cooperation with the Holy Spirit on behalf of making the world (including the workplace) a better place.

1. Look at work situations, people, and decisions to be made (*especially ethical ones*) from a Catholic Christian MBA (Mindset, Beliefs, Attitudes).
 - What is going on in this circumstance? What am I experiencing, thinking and feeling?
 - In what way is God present in the midst of this situation? How do I believe God, understood through the wisdom tradition of the Catholic Church, wants me to "see" this? To respond to this? To grow? (If necessary -- consult Scriptures, Catholic Tradition, appropriate people of faith, a faith-filled friend or mentor.)
 - So what? Now what?
2. Consider being part of a reflection, support, accountability, and prayer group with several people of faith or even one. Meet regularly (possibly weekly, biweekly, or monthly). Use one's own work situations, Scripture, church documents, faith-based books divided into chapters, brief reflections or inventories as a springboard for discussion. Focus upon:
 - How is my faith influencing my work in positive ways?
 - What challenges might I be having in making a strong faith at work connection?
 - What am I learning; how am I being formed as a Catholic through this?
 - What am I being called to do? What is my growth edge? What steps will I take?
 - How will we as members of this group encourage one another and hold one another accountable?
3. Include "sacred" objects in your work environment: a rosary, a crucifix, a scapular, a picture or photo, a lapel pin, an inspirational saying, an important reminder. Some of these could be a computer screen saver. Develop a sacred perspective toward a sometimes bothersome object—such as the telephone.
4. Strive for excellence and live with imperfection. Develop and implement your own quality assurance practice. Each time you deal with "allowable" imperfection, your own or someone else's, remember the humanity of us all. Let God be God. Integrate accountability with compassion, compassion with accountability.
5. Become a more appreciative person. First notice and relate to others what you appreciate, what you see that is good. Consider beginning meetings with the opportunity for people briefly to comment about what is good. Remember Genesis -- "and God saw that it was good." List several ways that you give thanks and congratulations to others. Brainstorm additional ways. Put this list where you will notice it each day. Consider writing your own

6. Become adept at constructive discontent (as opposed to destructive discontent). Move from a problem focus to a solutions and possibilities focus. Influence others with this perspective. Ask the questions, "What can we do more of, better, or differently to work this through, to reach our goal? How can we encourage, challenge, and support each other in the process?"
7. Practice the Golden Rule. Put it in a place where you can see it often. Make an examination of conscience at the same time each day—reflect upon how you have treated others that day and what you can do for them tomorrow.
8. Build supportive relationships at work. Look for ways you can express small kindnesses toward others at work. When people start to gossip about someone, point out something good about the person being criticized. On a regular basis encourage people who may be hurting for some reason. Develop positive occasions for bringing people together.
9. Look for ways to become more balanced. How can you nurture your own spirit? Better live in the present moment? Be more attentive to areas in your life that have been unfairly neglected?
10. Be mindful of ways that the structures and policies of your organization can be improved to be in better alignment with God's purposes for human relationships and work. Integrate core ethical values more completely into job descriptions, employee hiring practices and orientations, workplace handbooks, performance reviews. Infuse the importance of good character into vision and mission statements. Be clear with employees, clients and vendors about the ethical principles to be practiced at work. Do whatever is called for at this moment in time.
11. Keep growing as a servant leader. Reflect upon what is motivating you. Be more conscious of serving God by serving the people of your organization. Create an environment in which everyone looks for ways to appropriately assist one another, especially in doing their best. Provide occasional lunch and learn opportunities for employee development.
12. Be the change you want to see in your workplace. May you inspire others.

Keep prayer as the heart and soul of living all these practices. Constantly invite God into your life and work. Ask God to lead. Be silent and allow God to instruct you. Seek God's presence, guidance, reconciliation, healing, challenge and strength in the sacraments — especially Eucharist and reconciliation. Imitate Christ — how would Christ think about this, what would Christ do? Be influenced by his strong convictions and loving ways. Remember that the first principle of Catholic ethics is to respect and uphold the dignity of each person. Continue to create a work environment in which people are respected and valued. Ask each day, "Was I a Catholic at work today? Did I live with integrity and active concern for others?"