

The background of the entire cover is a dynamic, abstract splash of dark brown ink on a light beige background. The ink forms intricate, swirling patterns that fill the frame, creating a sense of movement and depth.

age



adventure game engine

EXPLORATIONS

GIFTS OF
THE GODS

GIFTS OF THE GODS

Faith looms as a theme in many fantasy tales. Whether portrayed by stunning cathedrals packed with devout priests and lay people or represented by modest and isolated shamans, faith can be a powerful literal and symbolic force in the fantastical lands of game campaigns powered by the Adventure Game Engine, too. With the game rules presented here, you can create Player Characters and Non-Player Characters who draw on the power of their faith—power bestowed by deities or patrons either direct or mysterious, through clear contact or mystical secrets, as a reward for devotion and piety that favors the divine.

Take note: These powers do not have to mean that the power of faith is certain in your campaign setting. Perhaps characters with powers of the Divine Gift talent are so rare that many, or most, do not believe in them. Perhaps one religion exalts the spells of mages and considers the powers contained herein to be heretical, blasphemous, or tools of some hated “other.” In short, do not let these powers force your campaign to change its themes or style unless you want them to change. What is systematic and explicable to you, as a player of the game, may remain mysterious and confounding for the characters who dwell in the fantastical world full-time.

Consider what the true source of the Divine Gift’s power may be. A character possessing one or more Divine Gifts may be a devout

but otherwise common worshipper, a chosen icon or champion of an institutionalized religious authority, or a rare and wary recipient of that dreaded but frequent fantasy trope: destiny.

NEW BACKGROUNDS



In some campaigns, a given religion may be so rare or so ubiquitous that religious backgrounds are unnecessary—religion may infuse any background, in its way. To provide some support for characters with strong religious origins that tie into the Divine Gift talent at the heart of these rules, however, we offer two new backgrounds to adapt to your campaign setting.

CLOISTERED MONASTIC

The talented, the abandoned, the needy, the weak—people of many sorts are drawn from the world at large into the cloisters of the monastery. There they train in scholastic arts and lore, learn to read and write, and are immersed in the traditions and customs of piety. The cloistered monastic is infused with the tenets and behaviors of the faith even if faith itself sometimes remains elusive.

Cloistered monastics are brought up in bookish, miniature worlds where knowledge—and the recitation of knowledge—is celebrated alongside dutiful rituals and acts of charity. Orphans become scholars, runaways become scribes, children without futures become instruments of public good and religious enlightenment. Cloistered monastics learn reverence and lore like clay is shaped into a vessel that holds wine—it fills the monastic up and gives him purpose. The majority of these folk do not seek, and never shall know, adventure. Yet, sadly, clay vessels sometimes break.

These souls sometimes find themselves driven out of the cloisters by happenstance or decree. A simple journey on pious business or local charity can lead to a life of unlikely adventures; a crisis of faith or refusal to obey the monastic leadership can lead to exile and a downward spiral of misadventure. Some take up new lives to better serve their religious order or defend their way of life, others seek to flee their cloistered past or simply to survive in a harsh world.

Outside the cloisters, these characters may struggle to retain their piety or strive to shed their old ways. Some flee the monastic life like a child fleeing a burning home, others sneak out in the night, and others still nobly venture forth in body while keeping the candles of faith burning inside them. Once the cloistered life is left behind, however, few are welcomed back to its safety, seclusion, and discipline.



PLAYING A CLOISTERED MONASTIC

If you choose to play a cloistered monastic, modify your character as follows:

- ♦ Add 1 to your Cunning ability. The early years of a cloistered monastic are dedicated to learning, study, and dogma.
- ♦ Pick one of the following ability focuses: **Cunning (Religious Lore)** or **Willpower (Faith)**.
- ♦ Choose your character's race from those suitable to your campaign setting.
- ♦ You can speak, read, and write the common tongue and one dead, formal, or foreign language of your choice.
- ♦ Select any class. Add the Divine Gift talent to your options for starting talents for that class, with your GM's permission.

Roll twice on the accompanying table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

CLOISTERED MONASTIC	
2D6 ROLL	BENEFIT
2	+1 Willpower
3–4	Focus: Cunning (Historical Lore)
5	Focus: Cunning (Research)
6	Focus: Willpower (Self-Discipline)
7–8	+1 Communication
9	Focus: Constitution (Stamina)
10–11	Focus: Cunning (Writing)
12	+1 Perception

SPIRITUAL DEVOTEE

Some find solace and guidance from religion, drawing power from its institutions and traditions. Others discover their spirituality outside of religious hierarchies and develop a more personal relationship with their faith. These souls may become involved with organized religions over time or they may strive to keep their social standing or politics separate from their faith.

This character's history of faith might not be one any church or temple seeks to uphold as an example to others. Faith despite dogma can be seen as a challenge to, or resistance of, religious authority in some institutions. A spiritual devotee may be dutiful and loyal to the laws and religion of the land, but her faith is in the powers above the institution. She may hope for and work for the best interests of the earthly religion, but the defeats of the flesh and the stone do not reflect or diminish her devotion to the gods.

Spiritual devotees can come from common, noble, or ignoble origins. A spiritual devotee may develop her faith despite a strict or rigid dogma imposed on her by society or because she was raised in the absence of such rigidity. No matter her ambitions, her race, or her class, her faith is an intrinsic part of her origins and identity.



PLAYING A SPIRITUAL DEVOTEE

If you choose to play a spiritual devotee, modify your character as follows:

- ✦ Add 1 to your Willpower ability. A spiritual devotee's strength of will is a foundation for faith.
- ✦ Pick one of the following ability focuses: **Willpower (Faith)** or **Willpower (Self-Discipline)**.
- ✦ Choose your character's race from those suitable to your campaign setting.
- ✦ You can speak and read the common tongue.
- ✦ Select any class. Add the Divine Gift talent to your options for starting talents for that class, with your GM's permission.

Roll twice on the accompanying table for additional benefits. Roll 2d6 and add the dice together. If you get the same result twice, re-roll until you get something different.

SPIRITUAL DEVOTEE	
2D6 ROLL	BENEFIT
2	+1 Cunning
3–4	Focus: Cunning (Religious Lore)
5	Focus: Communication (Persuasion)
6	Focus: Willpower (Morale)
7–8	+1 Communication
9	Focus: Perception (Empathy)
10–11	Focus: Cunning (Cultural Lore)
12	+1 Perception



A divinely gifted mage may be a scholar-priest, possessed not only of divine blessings, but also formidable spellcasting abili-

ties. Depending on the setting, those spells could also be divinely granted, gained through intense prayer and meditation rather than study of the arcane arts. In other settings, mages all wield the same arcane power, but some are also divinely blessed.

ROGUE

Although a divine rogue may seem like a contradiction in terms, the class can create a number of different combinations with a Divine Gift. Some blessed rogues emphasize Communication and serve as evangelists and wandering preachers, able to look after themselves in the rough and often lawless frontiers. Others are sly and dangerous spies or assassins, perhaps devoted to the cult of a death- or war-god. There are divinely gifted rogues serving the Dominion of Theft itself, giving them advantages no ordinary thief commands. Lastly, some rogues are holy (or unholy) soldiers, but of a more deft and cunning nature, such as a religious order of scouts, rangers, or woodsmen.

WARRIOR

The divine warrior is a true champion or crusader, chosen defender of the faith, anointed slayer of its foes. Divine warriors may be templars or paladins, the militant arm of a church or religion. They can also be the savage killers of cults serving Dominions like Death and War, upholders of the Dominions of Law or Protection (empowered to act as police or judges), or even champions of Knowledge or Love, using skill at arms to safeguard such precious qualities.

DIVINE DOMINIONS

Divine Gifts are defined by Dominions, areas of influence in the portfolios of the various divine powers. The following are some common Dominions. The Game Master chooses which Dominions are available and is free to expand upon or modify these Dominions to suit the setting and the role of the divine in it.

CHAOS

You partake in a portion of the divine power of chaos and madness.

NOVICE: When you generate stunt points, you may choose to “wager” them double-or-nothing: Roll another test against the same TN as the one that generated the stunt points. If you succeed, and the Dragon Die is at least equal to your first roll, you get an equal amount of stunt points to use on your *next* turn (provided your action next turn is successful). If the second test fails or the Dragon Die is less than your first roll, you lose the original amount of stunt points and have none.

Example: Norber, devotee of Chaos, is feeling lucky: His TN 11 attack test rolls doubles and scores a 3 on the Dragon Die for 3 stunt points. He decides to wager them and rolls again immediately, looking to roll at least an 11 total and a 3 or higher on the Dragon Die. He rolls a 12, but only a 2 on the Dragon Die, so he loses his 3 stunt points. If he had rolled a 3 or higher on his second Dragon Die, he would have had 3 stunt points to spend this turn and another 3 on his following turn!

JOURNEYMAN: Once per encounter, you can force a subject you can perceive to re-roll the dice for a test and use the result you prefer.

MASTER: Once per day you can invoke an aura of chaos around you as a major action. Foes within 6 yards of you must succeed on a **Willpower (Self-Discipline)** test against your Zeal to take any major action. If the test fails, they are distracted or behave erratically, doing nothing of significance. You can maintain the aura by spending your minor action each round to do so. It lasts for rounds equal to your Willpower after you stop maintaining it, then dissipates.

CRAFT

You have divine insight into the arts and crafts of civilization.

NOVICE: You can use the Heal action to repair damaged items, restoring them to wholeness. Use **Willpower (Faith)** in place of Cunning (Healing) for the test. This ability only affects damage to constructed items, not entirely natural ones, so it can repair a stone wall, for example, but not a broken stalactite in a natural cave.

JOURNEYMAN: With a touch and a major action, you can strengthen a crafted object, increasing its Armor Rating by an amount equal to your Willpower (minimum of 1). This lasts for one minute and you can do so once per encounter.

MASTER: You can produce an ordinary item of equipment with a major action in a single round! If you start with appropriate raw materials (costing half the price of the finished item), then the item is real and permanent, and a fine example of craftsmanship. If you have inappropriate raw materials (e.g., a stalk of wheat for a blade, or a small stone for a wagon) then the item lasts for hours equal to your Willpower (minimum of 1) before reverting to the original material. Still, you can turn a leaf into a heavy shield or a handful of grass into a quiver of arrows. You may only have one temporary created item in existence at a time, although you can dismiss an existing one to create a new one after one hour.

DEATH

This Dominion grants you a portion of your patron's power over death itself.

NOVICE: Your touch and a major action can speed the process of decay, like the decompose spell (see the *Set 2 Player's Guide*) whenever you wish.

JOURNEYMAN: You draw strength from death. Any creature you slay barehanded or with a melee weapon grants you Health equal to the creature's Constitution (minimum of 1). This can restore lost Health or increase your Health above its normal amount, although not by more than your level. Health above your normal amount is not recovered when lost.

MASTER: You have a deadly touch. Simply by touching a living creature with a major action and a **Dexterity (Brawling)** attack test you can inflict 1d6 + Willpower penetrating damage.

jewels, or a dagger look like a comb. Victims of your deception can test Perception (any applicable focus) against your Zeal. If they win, they see through your deception.

JOURNEYMAN: You can disguise your person (including your voice and even scent) behind a veil of illusion. Anyone with reason to suspect you are not whom you appear to be can make a Perception (any applicable focus) test against your Zeal, as in the previous degree.

MASTER: You can veil an area the size of a large room, changing its appearance (from an abandoned ruin to a splendid ballroom, for example) and also concealing the presence of anyone there, making them unseen, or making them appear differently (noble partygoers rather than hideous undead, for example). Any hostile action by the concealed subjects removes the illusion from them. Victims make Perception tests as in previous degrees.

WAR

You are filled with the power to triumph in battle.

NOVICE: You gain a weapon focus of your choice.

JOURNEYMAN: Once per day you may bless the melee weapons of all allies within 10 yards (including your own) as a major action. For the duration of the encounter, their weapon attacks inflict an additional 1d6 damage.

MASTER: Once per day as a major action you may call upon divine warrior might, gaining either an Armor Rating bonus or a Strength bonus equal to your Willpower (minimum of 1) for the duration of the encounter. If your Willpower is 2 or greater, you may split the bonus between the two benefits, so long as the total does not exceed your Willpower score.

CREDITS

DESIGN STEVE KENSON WITH WILL HINDMARCH

DEVELOPMENT JEFF TIDBALL AND WILL HINDMARCH

EDITING: EVAN SASS GRAPHIC DESIGN: HAL MANGOLD

INTERIOR ART: DREW BAKER, JENNIFER MEYER, JAMES RYMAN, MIKE VILARDI

PUBLISHER, AGE SYSTEM DESIGN: CHRIS PRAMAS

GREEN RONIN STAFF: BILL BODDEN, JOE CARRIKER, WILL HINDMARCH, STEVE KENSON, JON LEITHEUSSER, NICOLE LINDROOS, HAL MANGOLD, CHRIS PRAMAS, EVAN SASS, AND MARC SCHMALZ

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GREEN RONIN PUBLISHING

3815 S. Othello St.

Suite 100, #304

Seattle, WA 98118

Email: custserv@greenronin.com

Web Site: greenronin.com



DIVINE STUNTS

Those favored by the divine can occasionally perform minor miracles in the form of divine stunts. These stunts work just like other stunts, except they require the Divine Gift talent, and the character's degree in that talent describes a cap on the stunts that character can use.

DIVINE STUNTS	
SP	DIVINE STUNT
1+	ARMOR OF FAITH: Divine fortune turns aside harm; you gain an Armor Rating bonus equal to the SP spent until your next turn.
1	DIVINE SACRIFICE: You may suffer up to 5 points of Health damage to grant an ally of your choice twice that amount in restored Health.
2	DIVINE INSPIRATION: You and all of your allies gain a +2 bonus on Willpower tests until the end of your next turn.
2	OVERCOME RESISTANCE: You ignore a target's normal resistance to your attack. For example, you can miraculously strike a creature immune to physical weapons and inflict normal damage, or use a fire attack against a creature resistant or even immune to fire.
3	DIVINE MERCY: The effect of one malign spell or divine talent affecting you or an ally of your choice immediately ends. This only removes ongoing effects (such as those of walking bomb or weakness). It does not cure damage or other permanent conditions.
3	SHIELD OF FAITH: Your faith protects you as surely as any armor. You gain +2 Defense until the beginning of your next turn.
4	DIVINE MANTLE: You are so clearly favored by the divine that one foe of your choice hesitates to oppose you, taking only a minor action on their next turn.
4	DIVINE AWE: You are so clearly favored by higher powers that all foes suffer a –2 penalty to all tests against you until the start of your next turn.
6	MIRACLE: The divine directly intervenes to aid you! You (the player) may ask the GM (playing the role of your divine patron) for any single favor within your patron's power and Dominion(s) to grant. The GM chooses the degree to which the divine fulfills your need, based on your character's faithfulness and the demands of the story.