APOSTATE

By *The Wondering Monster*



ll faiths have their apostates. Some clerics are cast aside for heresy, others commit an unforgiveable sin, still others lose their deity's support after a shift in alignment. In even rarer instances, the death of their deity renders a cleric apostate. Regardless of whether a cleric abandoned their faith or were abandoned by their god, the result is the same: you are unmoored, untethered, and cast adrift in a sea of nihilism.

If there were only one higher power, that might be the end of it. An apostate would simply return to their prior occupation or try to ply their skills as a thief, warrior, or wizard. But there is not just one higher power. There is a whole pantheon of gods, known and unknown, waxing and waning in their terrible majesty. An apostate's faith in their god may have crumbled, but not their innate belief that there is something bigger tipping the cosmic scales. And so, an apostate spends their days questing for a new god to worship.

Until an apostate can rejoin the ranks of the clergy, their abilities are as follows:

Hit points: An apostate gains 1d8 hit points at each level. Becoming an apostate does not impact any hit points previously gained. An apostate continues from their last level as cleric.

Weapon training: Apostates are no longer limited by the strictures of their former faith. As a result, they often revel in using weapons previously forbidden. They may wear any armor.

Alignment: Apostates often—though not always—have a different alignment than the god they previously served. Apostates may retain the same alignment if their god died or if they are convinced that another deity is the apotheosis of this alignment and wish to serve them instead.

Caster level: Apostates lack a caster level as they are no longer servants of a deity.

Magic: Apostates lose access to most of their divine magic. This includes all divine favors, turn unholy, lay on hands, canticles, and spells above level 1. Apostates may cast any level 1 spells they knew as a cleric (except *blessing*) owing to glimmers of divine power existing within them. The following caveats apply, however:

- Spell checks are determined by rolling 1d16 + Personality modifier.
- Failure results in permanent loss of that spell until a new deity grants it once more.
- Any success automatically results in the lowest possible success (12–13 range); generally speaking, these results do not directly empower others.
- A natural 1 on a spell check results in a minor corruption roll. As with wizards, a point of Luck can be burned to avoid corruption.
- Spell checks are hindered by their armor.

Apostates do not accumulate disapproval as they no longer worship a deity. Any failure on their part simply causes public shame.

Lay on hands: Apostates cannot lay on hands.

Turn unholy: An apostate no longer has the divine power to turn creatures unholy to their former deity. That said, these creatures do not know this. Whenever an apostate encounters an

intelligent creature (i.e., not undead) that they could have previously turned, they may attempt to trick them into believing that their former deity will smite them. Upon performing a successful Luck check, 1d6 1 HD creatures or a single 2 HD creature within 30' of the apostate may be turned for 1d3 rounds (a clever apostate working in tandem with a wizard's *cantrip* spell may possibly increase the number of creatures fooled). No damage, however, is possible as the apostate is bluffing. Creatures subject to an apostate's turn unholy do not roll a Will save since no divine magic is used.

While an apostate may occasionally fool some creatures with this trick, there are consequences for trying it too often. Their former deity may rage at the apostate for taking their name in vain and make that displeasure known. The deity might utter a curse, strike the apostate with a bolt of lightning, or use the incident as an opportunity for other clerics to demonstrate their devotion. If the apostate's status was foisted upon them by their deity's death, other believers will likely take justice into their own hands, either because they find the apostate's behavior distasteful or because they are unaware that the deity is dead. After all, a conniving demon might perpetuate a ruse that a deity still lives so as to further their own machinations, while a lawful minor power might do so to maintain order.

Temporal aid: Owing to their pervasive nihilism and fear of death, apostates increase the likelihood of "recovering the body." A dead character who makes a Luck check in the presence of an apostate rolls a d16 instead of d20. The likelihood of recovering an apostate's body does not increase, however, unless another apostate is nearby.

Grit: An apostate may lack the support of a deity or the technical prowess of warriors in combat, but they make up for it with sheer willpower—that is to say, grit. Each day, an apostate can add their Personality modifier to a number of attack rolls equal to their highest level as cleric. If successful, their Personality modifier is added to the damage.

Action dice: An apostate can use their action dice for attack rolls and skill checks.

Joining the Fold

The process by which an apostate becomes, once more, a man or woman of the cloth varies in each instance. One of the simplest methods is to meet an evangelist or visit a place of worship for another deity, whether a shrine or temple, and join the fold. As a new initiate, the apostate progresses through the hierarchy of their new religion beginning again at caster level 1 (owing to their prior work as a cleric, however, they gain experience twice as fast until they reach their previous caster level). More ambitious apostates seek to rejoin a new faith at their previous caster level by successfully retrieving a precious relic and donating it to a place of worship. Barring exceptional circumstances, an apostate cannot rededicate themselves to their former deity.

Table 1: Apostate

Level	Attack	Crit Die/Table	Action Dice	Ref	Fort	Will	Level 1 Spells
1	+0	1d8/III	1d20	+0	+1	+2	4 or less
2	+1	1d8/III	1d20	+0	+1	+2	5 or less
3	+2	1d10/III	1d20	+1	+1	+3	5 or less
4	+2	1d10/III	1d20	+1	+2	+3	6 or less
5	+3	1d12/III	1d20	+1	+2	+4	6 or less
6	+4	1d12/III	1d20+1d14	+2	+2	+5	7 or less
7	+5	1d14/III	1d20+1d16	+2	+3	+5	7 or less
8	+5	1d14/III	1d20+1d20	+2	+3	+6	8 or less
9	+6	1d16/III	1d20+1d20	+3	+3	+6	8 or less
10	+7	1d16/III	1d20+1d20	+3	+4	+7	9 or less

Table 2: Apostate titles

Level	Title by Alignment		
	Law	**Chaos**	**Neutral**
1	Heretic Acolyte	Faithless Zealot	Renegade Witness
2	Heretic Heathen-slayer	Faithless Convert	Renegade Pupil
3	Heretic Brother	Faithless Cultist	Renegade Chronicler
4	Heretic Curate	Faithless Apostle	Renegade Judge
5	Heretic Father	Faithless High Priest	Renegade Druid