

Rune Priest (Dwarf)

a DCC class

Rune Priests are a kind of dwarven Cleric that rely upon sacred runes taught by the dwarven gods who, it is said, are embodied deep below the earth in their full glory. Rune Priests are functionally very similar to human clerics except they lack the ability to turn unholy or request divine aid, and they possess a limited ability to cast wizard spells. In addition, they have special advantages when fighting with two-handed weapons (e.g. battle axe, polearm and two-handed sword).

Hit points: Rune Priests roll 1d8 for hit points every level. Their faith and outrage drive them onwards.

Weapon training: Rune Priests are proficient at wielding clubs, hand axes, javelins, longswords, spears and warhammers. In addition, they can be considered trained in all two-handed melee weapons that are not extremely exotic.

Choosing a god: Rune Priests do not select a single god, because they are supposed to serve all dwarf gods equally. In general, dwarfish gods approve of any action that enhances dwarf civilization. They disapprove of the opposite, or any action that improves another race's standing relative to that of dwarfs. The Rune Priest's relationship with his god serves as a proxy for his obligations to the actual beings that he treats with.

Chaotic Rune Priests, however, serve no gods. The whims of the beings they serve are not consistent from casting-to-casting. In general, players should be discouraged from playing chaotic Rune Priests, but it can be done if all parties are willing. Note that such individuals are anathema to all decent dwarves, and can expect to be the target of violence from many of their kind.

Alignment: The fact that Rune Priests are supposed to serve all dwarf gods gives them the latitude to be either neutral or lawful.

There are a few rare chaotic Rune Priests. These practitioners have learned the secrets of the runes, but they have turned away from the dwarfish gods. Such a thing could never happen in times of old.

Caster level: Caster level is a measurement of a Rune Priest's power in channeling spiritual energy. A Rune Priest's caster level is usually his level as a Rune Priest, but this may be modified under certain circumstances. Many Rune Priests adventure in search of holy relics that bring them spiritual authority, and thus increase their effective caster levels.

Magic: A Rune Priest can call upon the reserves of favors owed to him through ancient racial bargains and rites of binding, instead of directly channeling the power of their gods; this is a good thing, too, since they haven't seen their gods in many years. Successful invocation of these debts allows a Rune Priest to channel the power of supernatural beings as a magical spell. A Rune Priest has access to the spells of his god as noted on table 1-5.

To cast a spell, a Rune Priest makes a spell check (see page 106). The spell check is made like any other check: roll 1d20 + Personality modifier + caster level. If the Rune Priest succeeds, his god attends to his request – not always predictably, but with generally positive results.

If the Rune Priest fails he risks disapproval. His supernatural credit was insufficient, or some form of a contract was violated. The effects of this are essentially identical to the disapproval suffered by clerics.

These rules apply to Rune Priest magic:

- Natural 1 means disapproval. On a natural 1 during a spell check, a Rune Priest discovers that he has somehow gained the disapproval of his deities. The spell check automatically fails, and the Rune Priest must roll on the Disapproval Table (see page 122).
- Each failed spell check increases the chance of disapproval. After his first spell check fails in a day, a Rune Priest's range of disapproval increases to a natural roll of 1 or 2. Thereafter, on any natural roll of 1 or 2, the spell automatically fails, and the Rune Priest must roll on the Disapproval Table. After a second spell check fails, a Rune Priest's range of disapproval increases to a natural roll of 1 through 3. And so on. The range continues increasing, and any natural roll within that range automatically fails. This means that a Rune Priest could potentially reach a point where normally successful rolls automatically fail because they are in the disapproval range. For example, a Rune Priest who fails 12 spell checks in a day would automatically fail any future spell check on a roll of 1 through 13, even though a roll of 13 would normally mean success on 1st-level spells. When the Rune Priest regains spells on the following day, his disapproval range is reset to a natural 1. Probably. Rune Priests who test their gods may find they are not always forgiving.
- Penalties can be offset by sacrifices. Once a Rune Priest's range of disapproval increases beyond a natural 1, he can reduce that range by offering sacrifices to his deity. See below for more information.
- Sinful use of spiritual power. A Rune Priest may be capable of using his powers in ways that displease the dwarf gods. Doing so is a sin. Sinful activities include anything that is not in accordance with the glory of dwarfish civilization; healing a character of an opposed alignment or healing or aiding a race at odds with the dwarfs (even if of the same alignment); failing to support dwarves when they are in need; and so on. When a Rune Priest commits a sinful act, he may incur an additional increase in his disapproval

range. This could amount to an increase of +1 for minor infractions all the way up to +10 for significant transgressions. These additional penalties are always at the judge's discretion, and may manifest accompanied by thunder and lightning, plagues of locusts, water running uphill, and other signs of divine displeasure.

Sacrifices: A Rune Priest may make sacrifices to the dwarf gods in order to regain favor. Any offering of material wealth counts. Other acts may count as well, at the discretion of the judge.

Sacrificing wealth means the items must be burned, melted down, donated to the needy, contributed to a temple, or otherwise relieved from the character's possession. They may be donated as part of a special rite or simply added to a temple's coffers. This is not a rapid combat action; it requires a minimum time of at least one turn and the Rune Priest's full concentration.

For every 100 gp (*not 50 gp!*) of sacrificed goods, a Rune Priest "cancels" one point of normal disapproval range. For example, a disapproval range of 1 through 4 can be reduced to 1 through 3. A natural 1 still counts as automatic failure and disapproval. A great deed, quest, or service to a deity may also count as a sacrifice, at the judge's discretion.

Lay on hands: Rune Priests heal the faithful. By making a spell check, a Rune Priest may lay on hands to heal damage to any living creature. The Rune Priest may not heal undead, animated objects (e.g., living statues), extraplanar creatures (e.g., demons, devils, elementals, etc.), or constructs (e.g., golems) in this manner. The Rune Priest must physically touch the wounds of the faithful and concentrate for 1 action. The spell check is made as any other: roll 1d20 + Personality modifier + caster level. Failure increases disapproval range, as noted above.

The damage healed varies according to several factors.

- It is always a number of dice, with the type of dice determined by the hit die of the creature to be healed. For example, a warrior uses a d12 hit die, so a warrior would be healed with d12 dice.
- The number of dice healed cannot exceed the target's hit dice or class level. For example, a Rune Priest healing a 1st-level character cannot heal with more than 1 die, even if he rolls well on his check.
- Finally, before rolling his spell check, the Rune Priest may elect to heal a specific condition instead of hit points. Healed dice translate to conditions as noted below. In this case, the target's hit dice or class level do not act as a ceiling. If the Rune Priest heals the indicated dice, the damaging condition is alleviated. "Overflow" hit dice do not become normal healing, and if the healed dice are too low, there is no effect.
 - Broken limbs: 1 die
 - Organ damage: 2 dice
 - Disease: 2 dice
 - Paralysis: 3 dice
 - Poison: 3 dice

- Blindness or deafness: 4 dice

The Rune Priest's alignment further influences the results, as follows:

- If the subject is a non-chaotic dwarf, they count as "same" on the table below.
- If the subject is a non-chaotic creature other than an elf or dwarf, the . Such a healing action constitutes a sin if it can be expected to hamper the dwarven people.
- If the subject is chaotic or an elf, they are always considered "opposed." The act of healing such subjects is considered a sin unless there is a very good reason for it.
- For chaotic Rune Priests, chaotic beings are considered "same," neutral beings are considered "adjacent," and lawful beings are "opposed." There is no sin for healing anyone, however.

When laying on hands, Rune Priests make a spell check and reference table III for the results. A numeric result indicates the number of hit dice healed.

Learning wizard spells: Unlike human clerics, Rune Priests are able to learn wizard spells. When the Rune Priest goes up in level, he may choose a wizard spell to learn. The levels of these wizard spells cannot be higher than the Rune Priest's highest castable cleric spell level. A Rune Priest starts the game knowing one randomly determined wizard spell.

The cleric spells that a Rune Priest learns are determined randomly. A Rune Priest freely selects the arcane spells they want to learn, but to actually learn each such spell, he must complete a quest. The judge determines what the quest will be, as usual. The Rune Priest is able to divine what he needs to do for a quest, though not in detail. He may only know enough to get started. There are plenty of opportunities for surprises.

Use of wizard spells: When a Rune Priest casts a wizard spell, the resolution combines aspects of cleric and wizard mechanics. The usual spell check is rolled (i.e. Personality modifier + CL). If the casting is a failure, then in addition to the spell not going off, the disapproval range increases by one.

Finally, if the roll is a fumble, then the caster first suffers the effects of deity disapproval. On top of that, the Rune Priest automatically receives a request from the dwarfish gods, and until this request is fulfilled, his or her disapproval range will not decrease. If the same caster accrues multiple requests in this fashion, then they must all be fulfilled before the range can be lowered.

For chaotic Rune Priests, the nature of the request is completely random, since the caster does not proxy his spiritual debts through the dwarf gods.

Two-handed weapon fighting: Rune Priests gain certain advantages when fighting with two-handed melee weapons. First of all, Rune Priests gain +1d when rolling damage, and

second of all, they roll on critical table IV instead of critical table III when a critical hit is obtained.

Infra-vision: Dwarfs may see up to 60' in the dark.

Slow: Due to their stout stature, dwarfs have a base movement speed of 20' per round instead of the 30' per round of humans.

Underground Skills: Long life beneath the ground trains dwarves to detect certain kinds of construction. When underground, dwarves receive a bonus to detect traps, slanting passages, shifting walls, and other new construction equal to their class level. Additionally, a dwarf can smell gold and gems. A dwarf can tell the direction of a strong concentration of gold or gems within 100'. Smaller concentrations, down to a single coin, can still be smelled but require concentration and have scent ranges as low as 40' (for a single coin or gem).

Luck: At first level, a Rune Priest's Luck modifier applies to attack rolls with one specific kind of weapon (e.g., "battleaxe," not "axe"), just as a warrior's does. This kind of weapon must be chosen at 1st level, and the modifier remains fixed over time, even if the dwarf's Luck score changes, and it must be a two-handed melee weapon.

Languages: At 1st-level, a Rune Priest automatically knows Common, the dwarf racial language, plus one additional randomly determined language. A dwarf knows one additional language for every point of Int modifier, as described in Appendix L of the DCC core rules.

Action dice: A Rune Priest's action dice can be used for attacks or spell checks.

Table I: Rune Priest Progression

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

* Use critical table IV when striking with a two-handed melee weapon.

Table II: Rune Priest Known Spells

Level	Known Wizard Spells	Known Cleric Spells By Level				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	1	2	-	-	-	-
2	2	3	-	-	-	-
3	3	3	1	-	-	-
4	4	4	2	-	-	-
5	5	4	2	1	-	-
6	6	5	3	1	-	-
7	7	5	3	2	-	-
8	8	6	4	2	1	-
9	9	6	4	2	2	-
10	10	7	5	3	2	1

Table III: Effects of laying on hands

Spell check	Same	Adjacent	Opposed
1-11	Failure	Failure	Failure
12-13	2	1	1
14-19	3	2	1
20-21	4	3	2
22+	5	4	3

Table IV: Rune Priest Titles

Level	Title (all alignments)
1	Scholar
2	Scribe
3	Poet
4	Seer
5	Sage