

Dragon Priests

Dragons have specialty priests, just humans, demihumans, and humanoids do. Such dragons often feel an especially strong calling at a young age, drawing them to a specific deity's worship. Many then seek out another priest to learn from, while some receive their instruction from the deity or his agents directly, through visions and divine inspiration. Very rarely, a dragon will feel this calling at a later stage of life or come to the decision entirely on their own; such dragons generally cannot achieve the same level of power as other priests, however.

In the Council of Wyrms setting, draconic specialty priests can be used as PCs with the Dragon-Priest kit, and that kit can be used when creating NPC priestly dragons (specialty or otherwise) in other settings. The ability requirements of any individual specialty priests supersede the kit's requirements, and the required and bonus proficiencies are in addition to or replace those of the kit, at the DM's discretion. Outside of the Council of Wyrms setting, most of the rules can still be used, but it can be assumed that any NPC dragon encountered has mastered the combat skills of his race as normal. Bonded hoards are also not necessary outside of the Council of Wyrms setting for NPC dragons, but DMs may want to reroll treasure results to increase the percentage of clerical items available to the dragon in its hoard.

Spellcasting Abilities: Dragons who choose to devote their lives to the gods lose the access to spells that normally occurs over a dragon's lifespan. Their intense study and contemplation of the tenets, duties, and philosophies of the gods precludes the haphazard magical ponderings that normally causes spells to coalesce in their minds. An adult or older draconic specialty priest can create magic items, scrolls, or potions as any high level priest. The effective spellcasting level of a draconic specialty priest is calculated by adding the dragon's Hit Dice (base Hit Dice plus age modifier) to their combat modifier. For example, a very young blue dragon casts his spells as if he were a 12th level priest (14 [base Hit Dice] – 4 [Hit Die modifier] + 2 [Combat Modifier]), while a great wyrm blue would cast spells as if he were 34th level (14+8+12). Those priests able to turn undead do so at half their effective spellcasting level, and any modifiers applied to the class are applied after halving their effecting spellcasting level. The dragons in the examples above would turn undead as if they were 6th level and 17th level priests, respectively. If they were specialty priests who turned as if two levels lower, they would turn undead as if they were 4th level and 15th level.

Spell Advancement: In the Council of Wyrms setting, dragons are drawn to serve the gods as dragon-priests while still hatchlings. This holds true for specialty priests in that setting as well. In the Cult of the Dragon accessory, specialty priests were presented as a function of a dragon's natural priestly spellcasting abilities. However, many dragons, particularly the chromatic dragons, gain only minor priestly spellcasting abilities and such dragons would not particularly stand out from their non-priestly peers. The following rules are intended to replace the rules presented in Cult of the Dragon for those dragons who come to their priestly duties later in life than Council of Wyrms dragon-priests. A dragon can choose to become a specialty priest at any age category up to and including the age category at which they first gain priestly spells. Starting at that age category, they are effectively level 1 according to the spell advancement table below, gaining a level with each new age category they achieve; note that spells and other priestly abilities are still handled as detailed above, regardless of when a dragon joins a faith. Dragons who become specialty priests when they are Very Old (age category 9) or older gain double the normal priest spells of each level as an added boon from the draconic deities. Dragons keep any wizardly spellcasting powers they've gained up to (but not including) the age category at which they become a specialty priest, but forfeit all future wizardly magic they might otherwise have gained. All dragon-priests gain bonus spells for a high Wisdom score.

For example, a red dragon may be able to become a specialty priest at any age category up to and including Venerable (category 10). At that age, they would keep their previously acquired wizard spells (2 of each spell level from first through third), but gain no more, and instead gaining priestly spells as listed on the chart below, starting at Level 1. As they are Very Old or older, they would get double the spell allotment, but stop at Level 3. If they had become a specialty priest as a Juvenile, they would gain the standard spell allotment up to the maximum at Level 9, but gain

no wizardly spells. A red dragon wyrm or great wyrm has already passed the point where they can become a specialty priest.

Non-Standard Priests: Very rarely, a dragon holds such fervent faith in a deity that they far outstrip their brethren in the speed of their advancement. Such dragons gain priestly levels just as humans do, using the spell advancement chart in the Player's Handbook. Priestly spells, turning, and class powers are used at their priest class's level. They must abide by all the restrictions placed on their class, although they gain no Hit Dice for the class and get no hit point adjustments due to high Constitution, and they still use their normal THAC0. Dragons who follow non-draconic gods typically become priests of this sort and gain granted powers based on their class level, while priests of this sort who follow draconic gods gain granted powers based on their age category. These specialty priests retain their standard wizardly magic, but lose any priest spells they'd normally gain for a dragon of their species.

Priest Level	Spell Level						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
3	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
4	3	2	2	—	—	—	—
5	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
6	4	3	3	2	—	—	—
7	4	4	3	2	1	—	—
8	5	4	4	3	2	—	—
9	5	5	4	3	2	1	—
10	6	5	5	4	3	2	—
11	6	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	7	6	6	5	4	3	2