

## Brewer's Guide to Reach Clerics



There are a number of guides to various styles of Clerics, and they all possess the same inherent problem: Action Economy. Or more specifically, what to do with the Standard Action each turn.

At level 1, Clerics are completely martial. With only 3 or 4 non-cantrip spells per day, they're going to basically be a fighter that can cast Cure Light a few times. They simply can't cast enough spells to be any sort of "caster character". At level 1, there's not a problem with Action Economy: each action is being spent doing some sort of attack.

At level 20, Clerics are completely caster. They get far more value out of casting a spell than they do by attacking. Why do a standard attack if you can summon a Storm Giant that will do more damage over the course of a battle while soaking up damage? Why do a quickened Righteous Might when you can do a quickened Wall of Stone? At level 20, there's not much problem with the Action Economy either: you use magic if you've got a standard action to work with.

And in between those two levels? The Cleric is a strange mix between the two directions, which intersect in a very bad way: The Standard Action. Unless a Full Attack is involved, both the martial and spellcasting require the round's standard action, which means you have to choose which half of the character to use. It's especially bad if you play a character through a wide range of levels - all those martial feats and abilities you took early on have to look on sadly while your character spends most of their time in battle casting spells.

Fortunately, there's a build that gets around this limitation: a Reach Cleric

## ***What's a Reach Cleric?***



A Reach Cleric uses a Longspear and smart tactics to do full spellcasting while using Combat Reflexes and Attacks of Opportunity to deal out martial damage. One common example would be the Reach Cleric positioning themselves 15 feet away from the enemy and then casting a spell. If the enemy wants to close the distance, the Reach Cleric will get the attacks they didn't take during their own turn.

This means the martial aspect and the spellcasting aspect no longer conflict over the standard action. The spellcasting is done on the Reach Cleric's turn, while the damage dealing is done on the foe's turn.

This will likely only work the first round or two; afterwards, the battlefield will probably be in a position where you can't back away and still have the enemy approach you on their turn. But that turn or two is all you need - you get off your spells during the most critical rounds of combat, and without sacrificing your martial abilities.

### ***About this Guide***

For the most part, this guide will discuss the top tier options for each item – feats, domains, etc. This isn't to say that other options aren't available, merely that they aren't the best choices you could make.

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*For this guide, I will be using a revised version of Treanmonk's coloring guide. Blue will be the top tier, best choices; Green will be solid choices; Orange will be viable options that probably aren't the best to go with. Anything that would ordinarily be Red simply isn't included.*

## **Stats:**

**Strength:** Primary. This is your main stat and it determines how much damage you can dish out.

**Wisdom:** Your secondary stat. The bonus spells from a high wisdom are nice but aren't worth sacrificing Strength over. Likewise, increasing the Save DC isn't a huge factor either. Your main concern should be making sure you can cast the high level spells if/when you get to them. 14 is a nice place to start for this stat.

**Constitution:** A tertiary stat. You want this at least 14. Okay, you want something higher than that, but the starting point-buy will be stretched pretty thin.

**Dexterity:** A tertiary stat. You want this at 14, which gives you three attacks of opportunity each round. Between Strength, Wisdom, Constitution, and Dexterity, your starting stats will be stretched pretty thin. The good news is that you're not quite MAD – most of these stats are not ones you'll feel compelled to pump much (if at all.)

**Intelligence:** A dump stat. A low intelligence stretches your skill points, but it's a necessity to make the starting stats to work. This should almost always be a 7. It takes 4 points in point buy to get this up to a point where you get an extra skill point (there's no difference between 7 and 8 for Clerics in terms of skill points.)

**Charisma:** A dump stat. It does hurt that this restricts the number of channels available. But like Intelligence, it's a necessity to get the stat block to work out. This should be 7 unless you have a very good reason.



## **Favored Class Bonuses**

**Hit points.** Every time. Reach Clerics are so starved for starting stats that their Constitution will likely be short of where they'd ideally want it to be. An easy way of helping that out is to pump up hit points with the favored class bonus. Later on, it becomes much easier and cheaper to get a few extra skill points (a +2 Int Headband, +5 skill items, etc) than it is to give yourself more hit points.

This is doubly true if you're using point buy. Compare the following:

Option A: Intelligence of 8, Constitution of 14, Favored Class Bonus into Hit Points

Option B: Intelligence of 7, Constitution of 16, Favored Class Bonus into Skill Points.

... both of these have almost identical results – same hit points, same total skill points. The difference is that Option B costs 3 more points during Point Buy.

## Races:

### Core

**Human.** This should be your default choice. In fact, this option fits the Reach Cleric so well that not only are none of the other choices blue, but they're all described in terms of how they compare to Humans. First, Humans have a stat boost in your most important stat (Strength.) They also get an extra skill point – which is very important, since you'll likely be dumping your intelligence. But the biggest reason this should be your race of choice is the bonus feat. This build is more feat-starved than pretty much anything else in Pathfinder (especially if stuff outside the Core Rulebook is available to you.)

**Half-Elves, Half Orcs.** They get a +2 Strength stat boost as well, but the extra skill points and feat are sorely missed. You should only choose these if you have a concrete reason to not play a human.

**Dwarf.** This may be tempting, since they get boosts to two important stats. But like the Half-Elves and Half-Orcs, the loss of the skill points and bonus feat really hurt.

### Featured Races (Advanced Race Guide)

**Hobgoblins.** This actually isn't too shabby. Getting +2 to both Dexterity and Constitution is arguably better than a +2 bonus to strength. That still doesn't mean it compares at all with Humans.

**Orc.** Actually, a very solid option. You get +4 to your primary stat, and two of the downsides (charisma and intelligence penalties) aren't really a huge deal. Is the extra +2 strength worth the Wisdom penalty and the loss of the bonus feat compared to choosing Human as a race? No. But it's certainly a race to at least consider (just figure out ways to deal with Daylight sensitivity.)

**Oread.** A decent alternative to Human. You get bonuses to two stats that matter and a penalty to one that doesn't. Aside from the missing feat, the 20 foot speed is a bit of a pain. If you do go with this, it's worth giving an extra look at Erastil as a deity and choosing the Fertile Soil alternate racial trait.

**Tengu.** Not a bad choice. The penalty to Constitution is offset by increases in two different secondary stats. The bonus to Perception is nice, too.

### Uncommon Races (Advanced Race Guide)

**Changeling.** The stats aren't anything to write home about. But the extra bonus to damage isn't bad.

**Duergar.** The stats are good, and you get Enlarge Person once per day.

**Nagaji.** Not too bad. The stat bonuses are good (the only penalty won't matter if you dump Intelligence.) The bonus to Natural armor is nice as well.

**Samsaran.** Some pretty mediocre stat bonuses. That said, if you can get past that, you get what's effectively a +5 bonus to both Perception and Acrobatics (or two other skills of your choosing.)

**Strix.** The stat bonus isn't that good. That said, you can fly.

**Suli.** You get a stat bonus to Strength, another bonus that gives you an extra channel, and take a stat penalty that doesn't matter if you dump intelligence. You also get good energy resistances and get a Swift-Action ability to enhance your weapon with additional damage.

**Vanara.** Good stat bonuses and a bonus to Acrobatics. Not as good as Human by a long ways, but it's not a bad choice.

## A Quick Note on Summons

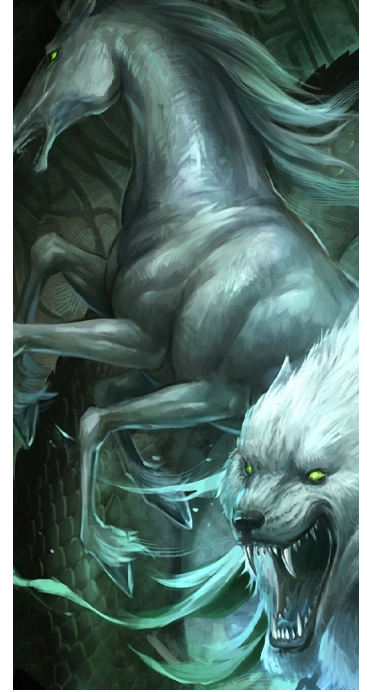
A lot of what follows – the deities, the domains, your alignment – hinge around how you summon.

Summon Monster is one of the best facets of being a Cleric. Being able to bring reinforcements into the fight, have them deal and take damage, affect the flow of battle, and even use spell like abilities - it's one of the best things to do early in battle.

The problem is, this doesn't work well with Reach Clerics. Summoning is a 1 Round action. This doesn't usually cause a problem for most characters, but Reach Clerics are depending on the opponent's turn for Attacks of Opportunity – which means you can't cast 1-Round Length spells.

Sacred Summons allows summoning as a standard action – so it's a feat that's absolutely perfect for a Reach Cleric. The caveat is that whatever you summon has to have the alignment subtype of your deity (the feat says your aura, but your aura matches your deity, not your actual alignment.)

This might seem intuitive, but it's actually pretty wonky, and has a decent chance of being house-ruled. So the first step is to talk with your GM on how they will rule this feat as functioning.



### Ruled As Written

Technically, Sacred Summons cannot be used to summon anything except the few creatures that have an alignment explicitly printed in the Summon Monster table. While the Celestial/Fiendish animals “always have an alignment that matches yours”, it doesn't actually give them an alignment *subtype*.

As written, here are the summons that are allowed:

**Lawful Good:** 3, 4, and 9 (Lantern Archon, Hound Archon, Trumpet Archon)

**Neutral Good:** 9 (Astral Deva)

**Chaotic Good:** 5, 6, and 9 (Bralani Azata, Lillend Azata, Ghaele Azata)

**Lawful Evil:** 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 (9 different monsters, most being devils)

**Neutral Evil:** 5 (Salamander)

**Chaotic Evil:** 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (9 different monsters, most being demons)

### Summon Monster Additions

The Bestiaries are filled with evil monsters. That's because, generally, the game consists of heroes fighting evil – so it makes sense that there are more evil listings than good ones. This does screw over good-aligned summoners and planar binders, though. You might be able to get your GM to add a few monsters from another Bestiary to the Summon Monster list to balance this a bit, such as:

**Shield Archon** (CR 10, LG) to Summon Monster 7

**Lyrakien Azata** (CR 2, CG) to Summon Monster 3

**Cassian Angel** (CR 2, NG) to Summon Monster 3

**Movanic Deva** (CR 10, NG) to Summon Monster 7

The idea is to get some monsters to bridge the gap – a suitable monster to summon every few levels.

### Celestial/Fiendish Template

If your DM rules that the Celestial/Fiendish template summons can be done with Sacred Summons, this really frees you up on your character design. Still, the outsiders with the actual alignment subtypes are still something to reach towards, since they've got valuable Spell Like Abilities.

## Deity Structure



When it comes to what to worship, you first have to choose whether to devote yourself to a deity or an ideal. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Fortunately, the “Favored Weapon” aspect of the deities doesn't complicate things, because the only deity that has a reach weapon (Sheylyn with her Glaive) doesn't really give a huge upgrade. A single extra point of damage is nice, but not what you want to be basing your choice on.

**Desna (Chaotic Good).** Desna is already called the “best” deity for clerics, and she doesn't disappoint. First, she gets some excellent domains – Luck and Travel are great for a Reach Cleric, but Good and Liberation are decent as well. Desna's, as Chaotic Good, has some of the juiciest non-evil Sacred Summons.

**Cayden Cailean (Chaotic Good).** An alternative to Desna, where Luck is replaced by Strength (or, as an alternative, Charm.) He has the same Sacred Summons, and the same amazing Travel domain.

**Iomedae (Lawful Good).** She gets Tactics – arguably the best subdomain for a Reach Cleric. However, unlike Desna or Cayden Cailean, she doesn't have any stellar second domains. The main draw, aside from the Tactics subdomain, is she has early Sacred Summons, so she's a great choice for a low level game with a strict GM.

**Erastil (Lawful Good).** Not the best choice, but the subdomains of Feather/Fur and Growth help turn really bad Animal and Plant domains into something usable. The biggest draw is the swift-action Enlarge Person, which is great for a Reach Cleric. Be very careful to not select a combination with really bad domain spells (a lot of the options really don't have good spells) – Feather + Growth is a good place to start.

**Asmodeus (Lawful Evil).** Even GMs that don't like evil PCs might allow this, as you can play a Lawful Neutral character that simply focuses more on the contracts and legality aspect of Asmodeus. Not only does Asmodeus have a lot of Sacred Summon options, but has excellent domains (which are even better if subdomains are allowed.)

**Lamashtu (Chaotic Evil).** In a lot of groups, worshipping a Chaotic Evil deity might be out of the question. And it's much more difficult to find a legitimate facet to focus on for the Goddess of Madness, Monsters, and Nightmares. That said, she has three excellent domains (Madness, Strength, and Trickery) along with a good set of Sacred Summons.

**Rovagug (Chaotic Evil).** Rovagug is like Lamashtu except it trades down in domains (Destruction, War, and Weather) for an easier time roleplaying in a non-evil party.

**An Ideal.** Generally, worshipping an ideal is more powerful than a deity, since you get to choose whichever two domains you want. The main downside is that your GM will probably say that your “ideal's” alignment will match your own. While it's easy to see serving a deity that's an alignment step from you, worshipping an *ideal* that's a step away is a lot less logical. You choose your ideal, after all. Which can put a kink in Sacred Summons. See the Domains section to help choose which two you want on your Ideal-Worshipping cleric.

## Domains



**Luck (Desna).** Luck is already a pretty solid domain, but what really gives it a nice bonus is the Touch of Luck. Ordinarily, this ability is a bit questionable - you spend a standard action to give a touch target better rolls – you waste your turn so they don't waste theirs? But with a Reach Cleric, standard actions are a lot less packed. You can position yourself, and then spend your standard action using this ability. The same is true with the True Strike spell - typically a waste for most Clerics, but are actually useful for a Reach Cleric. This is all on top of the usual draw for the Luck domain: Good Fortune, which lets you re-roll a bad throw.

**Fate.** Fate's just a different flavor of the Luck domain. Instead of rerolling your throws, you can make others reroll. Which is a lot better, but it's two levels behind (Luck gets its second ability to start at 6<sup>th</sup> level instead of 8<sup>th</sup>.) The spell swaps don't really amount to much change.

**Strength (Caiden Cailean, Lamashtu).** This is even better for Reach Clerics than it is for Greatsword wielding ones. Enlarge Person lets you attack someone far enough away that they can't 5-foot in against you, or let you play the reach game against a Large foe. Unfortunately, while the spells are solid (especially the first level Enlarge Person), one ability is merely okay and the other is worthless.

**Ferocity.** A trade up, though a minor one. Instead of taking a standard action to increase your attack rolls by half your level, you can choose a specific attack to have a bonus damage. The main difference is Ferocity doesn't require a standard action to do it.

**Resolve.** A really extreme change. On one hand, you lose a worthless ability (Might of the Gods) to get an amazing one – basically, a mini-channel that only hits your side. On the other hand, you lose Enlarge Person as a 1<sup>st</sup> level spell – which was one of the big draws of the Strength domain in the first place.

**Travel (Cayden Cailean, Desna).** It's probably the best domain for most clerics, and it's certainly not bad for a Reach Cleric. Early on, you get a permanent speed increase and access to Longstrider. At level 5, you get Fly. At levels 7, 8, and 9 you get different forms of teleportation spells. What's not to love?

**Trickery (Asmodeus, Lamashtu).** The Copycat ability is a bit worse than it sounds. You probably won't have many move actions to spare during a battle, so this is basically a “Negate One Attack” self-buff before the battle begins – not bad, but not as amazing as it appears at first glance. Master's Illusion is a creative use spell – the it's only as powerful as your imagination. The spells are pretty decent, if a bit strange on a cleric.

**Deception.** An upgrade for the Trickery domain. While Copycat isn't bad, it certainly doesn't compare to a tactical maneuvering mechanism that happens as an immediate action. Losing Invisibility to gain Mirror Image is actually a step up – since Reach Clerics really don't have much use for Invisibility. And unlike the pseudo-Mirror Image that Copycat gives you, the spell itself is quite a bit better, since it will negate more than a single attack.

**Fire (Asmodeus).** This domain gives you a lot of nice spells that the Cleric lacks. While you're not out to play a Blaster, having a fireball tucked away is never a bad thing. That said, you're never going to take this domain unless the APG is out of bounds, because both subdomains are better.

**Ash.** You lose the resistance to fire, but gain a decent battlefield control ability; unless you're going to be facing a lot of foes that deal fire damage, this is probably an excellent deal. Still, this subdomain loses to the alternative of Smoke.

**Smoke.** A better, more flexible Fire domain. And you lose an ability that becomes useless after a few levels and gain a battlefield control ability (of an admittedly minor scale.)

**Glory (Iomedae).** Decent spells, a questionable ability, and a completely useless ability.

**Heroism.** This is a nice trade up from Glory. It gets rid of the useless pacifism ability (if you attack, *everyone* you put it on loses the sanctuary effect.) In its place, you get a party buff at Swift Action speed. The spell swaps are improvements too.

**Good (Desna, Cayden Cailean, Iomedae).** This domain is generally the same - solid in an anti-evil campaign, mediocre against one that isn't. One thing to keep in mind is Touch of Good is questionable ordinarily; on a Reach Cleric, it can provide a nice bonus on both attacks and saves during the critical rounds.

**Liberation (Desna).** This domain ranges from Lukewarm to Amazing, depending on how often your DM throws control spells at your group (like Black Tentacles, Entangle, Grease, etc.)

**Madness (Lamashtu).** This is a pretty nice domain. The spells aren't really what you want, but the Touch of Madness alone makes the domain worth thinking about. Not on your allies, of course; on the end boss style monsters. It's almost unfair - you get a melee touch attack (which should almost always be an auto-hit) with no save that gives a hefty penalty to both their attack rolls and their saving throws.

**War (Rovagug, Iomedae).** If you're worshipping Iomedae, just skip on down to the Tactics subdomain. Playing Rovagug? Sadly, he doesn't get War and is stuck with this. Fortunately, it's not a bad domain. The first ability can give you some bonus damage on your attacks (though eating the standard action hurts it) and the second is amazing – it can free you up from taking martial feats as long as you won't need them very often; with Weapon Master, you can play act having Stand Still, Intimidating Prowess, Improved Sunder, Quick Draw, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus, etc. The spells are solid as well.

**Tactics.** The subdomain Rovagug wishes he got. If you've got a +6 in Initiative *and* you get to roll twice and take the better result? Yeah, you're going before the enemy in 99% of the fights. This alone would be worth contemplating the domain. This is on top of the underestimated Weapon Master ability (which is excellent on a Reach Cleric) and the solid domain spells.

**Weather (Rovagug).** Two useless abilities but a bunch of useful spells.

**Storms.** This domain at least replaces the Lightning Lord ability that gets obsolete very quickly. Tactically, the Gale Aura lets you attack an enemy at reach without allowing a 5' step.

## Other Domains/Subdomains

Playing a cleric that worships an ideal, and is free to choose any domains or subdomains you wish? Well, the best domains and subdomains are all represented above. Tactics is the place to start.



## Feats



How starved for feats you are depends entirely on what's available to use. If you're limited to PHB only, you're going to have feats to spare. If you're allowed the Advanced Player's Guide and the Ultimate line of books, you'll be incredibly feat starved. The feats below are grouped by general category.

### Absolute Essentials

These are the essentials. Every Reach Cleric should have every feat in this list. They're that good.

**Combat Reflexes - Early Levels.** After some more testing with the build, this has a little bit of green mixed in with the blue. It's still a feat you should take (and ideally at level 1.) That said, it's possible to skimp on this if you've got good initiative and *really* need the feat; you do still get an attack of opportunity without this. Still, this isn't something you want to do lightly – Combat Reflexes not only gives you the equivalent of iterative attacks during the opponents' turn, but lets you attack even if they beat your initiative.

**Power Attack - Early Levels.** This feat is a must-have for any Two-Handed wielders with strength as a primary stat. Unless you really need Improved Initiative first, this should be your second feat.

**Improved Initiative - Early Levels.** Going early in the initiative order is more important to a Reach Cleric than most other types of builds. Not only will some battles hinge on getting the right spell out as early as possible, but others will require you to get into a good position before the enemy moves.

**Sacred Summons - Any Level (Ultimate Magic.)** You've built your character's deity and alignment around this feat. It's worth it. So take this as soon as you've got a Summon Monster level that it will work on.

**Divine Interference - Mid to Late Levels, Available 11th Level (Ultimate Magic.)** This feat is solid blue for a higher level cleric. The main perk isn't that it imposes a penalty on an enemy's reroll, but that it makes them reroll at all. Put it this way: how much is a feat worth that says "Negate the first critical hit from each enemy you encounter"? You won't mind tossing away a Resist Energy spell to force that x3 critical from an Ice Devil's spear to get rerolled. At that point, you're throwing away a level 2 spell to heal between 34-51 damage *as an immediate action*. You'll be hard pressed to find better action economy and spell efficiency than that.

## Feats for Improving Martial Prowess

*If you want to improve your martial prowess a bit more, these feats will get more mileage out of the physical aspects of your character.*

**Lunge - Mid Levels.** This feat is amazing at level 9. This allows you to use your standard action as an attack while still staying far enough away that enemies can't simply 5-foot step in to attack you. It'll become less useful as the game goes on, but early on, it's a great way to get another attack in.

**Death or Glory - Mid Levels (Ultimate Combat.)** One of the Reach Cleric's biggest obstacles is opponents that have just as long of reach - basically, most large creatures and everything bigger. When that happens, they're basically in the same boat as Two-Handed Clerics are. This helps out with damage when it happens.

**Furious Focus - Mid Levels (Advanced Handbook.)** Basically, gain a bonus to the attack roll of the first Attack of Opportunity each round. This is probably worth it around level 9 or level 13, since getting an additional +3 or +4 is nothing to sneeze at.

**Dodge, Mobility.** Generally, the foes that Acrobatics won't work against, Mobility won't work either (if their CMD is high enough to thwart your Acrobatics roll, chances are their attack roll will crush your AC anyway.) That said, if you're shooting for a more skilled build, this is one way to trade feats for skill points (since you'll no longer need Acrobatics.) Most of the time, though, this is a bad idea.

## Battlefield Control

*In later levels, raw damage from your attacks is going to be worth a bit less – and taking a few feats to help out with battlefield control will go a long way. And this doesn't even require your spellcasting.*

**Stand Still.** An earlier version of this guide was in error. Technically, the book puts two limits on using this feat: that the foe is provoking an AoO, and that they're *in an adjacent square* – which makes the feat worthless.

**Dazing Assault - Mid to Late Levels (Advanced Handbook.)** This feat is a solid way of implementing battlefield control through your martial attacks. Dazing an opponent basically means they lose their turn, so this can be very handy against a throng of enemies.

## Spell Expertise Feat Chain (2-Feat Clump, Requires Advanced Handbook)

**Minor Spell Expertise - Late Levels (Advanced Handbook.)** A prerequisite.

**Major Spell Expertise - Late Levels (Advanced Handbook.)** Minor Spell Expertise was worth 2,000 gp. This feat is worth 50,000 gp. It's nice that the 5<sup>th</sup> level spells are one of the best spell slots

## Metamagic Feats (4-Feat Clump, Requires Advanced Handbook)

*The main point of this feat clump is to get Spell Perfection - likely, on Wall of Stone. This has a heavy price, though: not only three metamagic feats, but 15 skill points in Spellcraft. Fortunately, putting a +2 Intelligence on a headband is a reasonable way to acquire those extra skill points*

**Extend - Mid to Late Levels.** Aside from acting as a prereq, you can use this on Greater Magic Weapon.

**Quicken - Mid to Late Levels.** As you get higher in level, you'll have a lot more spells to work with, and the bottleneck won't be "Will I run out of spells?" but "How can I get my spells out faster?"

**Echoing Spell - Mid to Late Levels (Ultimate Magic.)** The "Three Slots Higher" is definitely a steep price to pay, but sometimes you'd rather cast a spell twice than a single time quickened. Still, it's mostly a prereq.

**Heighten Spell, Preferred Spell.** Basically, this is a way of getting either Breath of Life or Wall of Stone as a spontaneous spell. It's a steep price. Then again, getting either of those as spontaneous spells can be great.

**Reach Spell.** As a Cleric, you've got all sorts of nice touch spells to work with. But the thing that makes this a consideration is Heal as a non-touch spell. A consideration as your 13<sup>th</sup> level feat.

**Spell Perfection - Late Levels (Advanced Handbook.)** The whole point of this feat clump. If you do finish this out, seriously consider taking it a second time. After all, you already meet the prerequisites.

## Summoning Feats (3-Feat Clump, Requires Ultimate Magic)

*Superior Summoning is an excellent way to amplify Sacred Summons. It's a 3-feat chain, though.*

**Spell Focus (Conjuration) - Any Level.** Pretty worthless, but it's a prerequisite.

**Augment Summoning - Any Level.** This is somewhere between green and blue. Even if you can't take Superior Summoning afterwards, this feat is worth it all by itself.

**Superior Summoning - Any Level (Ultimate Magic.)** Consider this feat neon-blue. The ability to summon an additional monster along with your standard action summons? Simply amazing.

## Miscellaneous Feats

**Toughness - Early Levels.** This helps shore up a CON score that isn't up to front line combat. This will be blue if your party doesn't have much front-line presence; orange if you're in a party full of martial characters.

**Leadership - Mid Levels.** Leadership is always a great feat (if your DM allows it.) The real power behind Leadership is that you can address holes in the party layout. Are you and a druid the only spellcasters in the party? Bring aboard a utility wizard. Are you and a two-weapon ranger the closest thing to a front line? Adopt in a tank with 18 CON and full mail. If you're not sure, a great place to start is a bard specializing in Dazzling Display and Inspire Courage.

**Quick Draw - Mid to Late Levels.** This is solely there to help if you choose to pick up Quicken Spell. Combined with Weapon Chords, it allows you to use a Metamagic Rod of Quicken as a swift action (let go of the Longspear with the right hand so you're only holding it with the left [free action], quick drawing the rod with the right hand [free action], using the rod [swift action], dropping the rod [free action] and putting your right hand back on the longspears [free action]).

## Feats – Summary

If you're working with only the Core Rulebook, you're going to have feats to spare, and can branch out into multiple categories. If you're playing with the APG and Ultimate Books available, you're going to have to prioritize – you're going to be incredibly feat starved.

Another very important consideration is whether you've got the Weapon Master ability from the War or Tactics domains. This will make it easier to skip taking martial feats, since you can have the feats when you need them. Do your prep work – make sure you know which feats you qualify for, to use this ability to its utmost.

## Skills

**Perception.** Nothing to say about this that hasn't already been said many times over. It's the most used skill in the game.

**Acrobatics.** You're going to be doing a lot of maneuvering, and this can really help out against battles against numerous foes. Just remember, you don't lose the move action if you move through a threatened area and pass the check, so the only penalty for failing the check is taking the attack of opportunity.

**Everything Else:** You probably won't have any other skills – you just don't have the INT for it. This isn't to say you have to neglect those skill points. For instance, you can spare a point or two from Perception to be trained in a Knowledge or two. From there, “Masterwork Tools” can let you at least have a chance of contributing. This can be especially important in PFS.



# Spells



One big determining factor for which spells you should prepare is how you anticipate the day going in terms of battle counts. Does you expect multiple battles today? In that case, you want a lot of overlap on your spells - preparing the same buff spell 3 or 4 times isn't out of the question. Or do you only expect one, maybe two fights? Then you'll be better served by preparing a wide variety of spells, including buffs that stack with one another.

## Level 0 Spells

Orisons aren't really combat relevant. Which ones should take depends greatly on your play style, which cantrips/orisons are covered by other casters, and what spells are decent for your typical adventure.

**Create Water.** This spell spares the group from ever having to find water sources.

**Detect Magic.** You should use this whenever you see anything remotely suspicious or questionable. Even if there's a Wizard and a Druid in the party, you should *still* prepare this spell.

**Guidance.** How annoying do you want your character to be? If you don't mind the recurring chanting and the repetitive arm motions, you can cast this every 30-60 seconds to get a free +1 on the first attack in combat.

**Light.** Not only is this orison solid blue on its own, but everyone in the party will also expect you to have it at the ready. They won't be happy having to go through torches because you didn't prepare this spell.

**Mending.** This spell is blue if there is a bow/crossbow wielder in the party, since you can use it to repair their ammo after each battle (which saves them from having to do paperwork to keep track of how much is destroyed.)

**Resistance.** Basically, the same thing as Guidance, except with a free +1 to your saving throws. However, it doesn't stack with a Cloak of Resistance, so it'll be moot after a few levels anyway.

**Spark (Advanced Player's Guide).** Light an unattended object on fire. Of all the cantrips, this is the one that generates the wildest difference of opinions. Some claim it to be the best cantrip ever; others claim it's practically worthless. You'll have to decide whether the adventures you're in would make use of it.

## Level 1 Spells



**Bless.** A bit overrated. In early levels, it's better to just attack. If you cast this, 1 in 20 attacks will hit where they wouldn't have before. Stands to reason that unless the battle will take significantly longer than 20 attacks from your team, it'd be better to just do an attack now – and maybe prevent damage by killing its source. Having said all of that, Reach Clerics don't have to make the choice between attacking and casting. You can set up 15 feet and then cast. The optimal point for this spell is around level 7, when PCs are getting a second iterative attack and Divine Favor doesn't completely outclass it.

**Comprehend Languages.** A good utility spell, and one that should be prepped almost every day - with the knowledge that it'll get converted to a Cure Light most of the time.

**Divine Favor.** This spell starts out worse than Bless, but starts to get really good around the mid-levels. The ability to get a +3 luck bonus to attack and damage rolls is incredible. Later on, this still is solid - even though there are better higher-level spells, being able to do something this powerful on a level 1 spell is useful. Keep this spell in mind for Quicken.

**Magic Weapon.** You know Divine Favor? Prepare that instead.

**Obscuring Mist.** A decent spell, but one that takes a bit of work to be useful. Unlike other casters, you don't want concealment during battle. Generally, you'll use cast it and then move up 20 feet, leaving behind a place for the squishier members to get cover. Be very careful with this spell, though, because clever enemies can use it to thwart your general battle-plan (it can give enemies concealment.)

**Protection from Evil.** A decent early-level defensive buff.

**Shield of Faith.** I really don't like the naming of this spell, since it doesn't give a Shield bonus, but a Deflection one. This probably isn't worth casting once combat starts, but can be something nice to throw up if you know a combat is about to start.

**Ant Haul (Advanced Handbook).** This spell isn't for your character - with strength as a primary stat, you shouldn't have any problems lugging gear around. It's for the squishies in the party, who until you came along, were delicately balancing their gear against their Light Load limit.

**Murderous Command (Ultimate Magic).** It's a level 1 spell with a saving throw, so don't rely on it too much - enemies will often succeed on their save, negating the spell. That said it can be a nice way of both getting a little bit of extra damage while slowing down the enemy. Also, the effect lasts 1 round, which means your target might also get an attack of opportunity against its allies.

## Level 2 Spells



**Aid.** This spell gets a lot of flak for being a weak version of a level 1 spell (Divine Favor.) And at level 9 and beyond, this spell starts to look questionable. But another way of thinking about it is to look at it like preemptive healing: you get a slightly-better Cure Light Wounds and a less-powerful Divine Favor wrapped up into a single spell. Because when the first hit comes, it's simply taking out those temporary hit points.

**Bull's Strength.** Until you get a Belt of +2 Strength, this is one of your best self-buff spells. After that, Divine Favor begins to trump it and you should use your level 2 spells for other things.

**Bear's Endurance.** This isn't as useful as Bull's Strength to you. On the other hand, you'll get stat boosting items for strength long before constitution. So consider it a bad form of temporary hit points - it won't prevent you from needing to heal after combat, but it might stop you from dying.

**Darkness.** An underused battlefield control spell, though definitely check to see how the DM intends to rule on it (since there are a few ways they can rule the physics working.) The main limitation is that this only darkens by one degree – unless you're already in shadow, what it's hiding will still be visible.

**Resist Energy.** A nice utility spell to prepare each day, with the assumption that you'll convert it to a Cure Moderate most of the time.

**Lesser Restoration.** Another utility spell that's often worth preparing and assuming you'll convert it to a Cure spell.

**Shatter.** Can be useful against weapons and spell component pouches. Just remember that your Resist DCs aren't very high, so don't do it against anything with decent Will saves.

**Silence.** Can be incredibly useful against enemy spellcasters. Against them, you're not out to play a mage vs mage battle, but to use your martial abilities to beat them up.

**Weapon of Awe (Advanced Handbook).** This spell isn't worth much as first. Divine Favor will typically do better than it, and unlike Greater Magic Weapon, the spell only sticks around for a few minutes. However, later on, it's a good spell for the level because the bonus is a Sacred bonus - a bonus that's going to stack with pretty much anything else you do. It's a good candidate for a quickened spell.

**Web Shelter (Ultimate Magic).** A nice camping spell from level 8 or so onward.

**Compassionate Ally (Ultimate Magic.)** It's a Save or Suck spell - not the forte of the Reach Cleric - but one that's an improved Hold Person, since it doesn't allow a new saving throw each round.

**Spear of Purity (Ultimate Magic.)** The base damage on this spell doesn't scale very well, but it's a second level spell, so that's to be expected. The damage against evil outsiders, though, excellent - if you're fighting a campaign against devils or demons, expect to prepare at least one of these each day. While the target gets a save, it's only to halve the damage. There is one of these spells for each alignment axis.

**Grace (Advanced Handbook.)** Early on, this is a pretty high level for a pretty marginal effect. In later levels though? It can be an incredibly useful tool to back away from a really nasty threat.

## Level 3 Spells



**Bestow Curse.** Since your Resist DCs aren't very high, this spell isn't one you want to rely on.

**Blindness/Deafness.** Same thing as Bestow Curse - a powerful spell, but bad with a low Resist DC.

**Create Food and Water.** Up to you whether you can spare a slot to free the need for foraging.

**Deeper Darkness.** A darkness that can overcome regular lighting, and it stops darkvision. Like Darkness, this is a good spell to quicken, since you can throw an object that you've cast it on.

**Dispel Magic.** A handy utility spell that can overcome a lot of problems. The main thing to remember is: Never use it as a counterspell. If you're looking for a counterspell, use damage or a spell to distract them while they're casting. Instead, use Dispel Magic to remove already existing spells or buffs. This spell is blue if you're in a campaign where most of the enemies are NPCs instead of creatures.

**Inflict Serious Wounds.** Ordinarily this spell isn't worth preparing. However, it's one of the best spells to put in a Spell Storing Longspear. Even on a successful save, it's a decent amount of damage.

**Magic Vestment.** This spell is pretty bad in the beginning parts of the game. Trading a 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell to get a +1 or +2 armor is pretty weak. Later on? Using a 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell to turn a +1 Moderate Fortification Chainshirt into a +4 variety changes a 16k armor into one worth 49k.

**Prayer.** A subtle but solid spell, and one that doesn't allow a save for the enemies. Not only does it help both sides of the martial equation (making the party hit harder and more accurate; making the enemies hit weaker and less accurately) but the spellcasting side as well – saving throws are harder for enemies and easier for you.

**Remove Blindness/Deafness/Curse/Disease.** Nice utilities, but usually worth preparing.

**Speak with Dead.** This is actually a nice utility spell worth preparing each day, with the understanding it'll often be a Cure Serious. Keep in mind, the DM often wants to guide the party, and this gives them a way to do it. Cast it on a long-dead hero for information on a danger the land is facing; cast it on a dead victim to get information on who killed them; etc.

**Summon Monster III (with Sacred Summons).** By the time you get up to the third level spells, Summon Monsters are sticking around long enough to be worth it in battle. Also remember that Summon Monster gets a lot of mileage out of creative usage. Need to get someone up on a ledge? Have them ride a Dire Bat. Need to sniff out an invisible enemy? Wolves.

**Wind Wall.** This is a utility spell that can easily be worth preparing. A great anti-ranged option.

**Communal Resist Energy (Ultimate Combat.)** Taking a third spell slot instead of a second one is tough, but this is one of the communal spells that's worth the sacrifice. A lot of times when the need for Resist Energy comes up, you wish you had enough prepared for the whole party. This does just that.

**Archon's Aura (Ultimate Magic.)** There are better spells to toss out there on round 1. However, if you can prepare before-hand, this can be a nice debuff.

## Level 4 Spells



**Dimensional Anchor.** This is one of those utility spells that won't be required all that often, but when it is, you'll be glad you had it. Most of the time, though, you'll be converting this to a Cure spell.

**Divination.** The material cost of this is almost negligible (25 gp) - and unlike augury, you don't get back a one word answer. Definitely keep this spell in mind if the party seems stuck, since the DM will probably be pulling out his hair trying to figure out a way to get the adventure on track. This spell is a really handy way to let them do just that.

**Divine Power.** This is kind of like Divine Favor: weak at first, and then steadily more useful as you gain levels. I wouldn't bother preparing this spell until at least level 12 - until then, you get the same bonuses from a level 1 spell. After that point, though, the extra hit points and additional bonuses will probably be worth it taking up a 4th level slot.

**Greater Magic Weapon.** This steadily becomes a very important spell for a Reach Cleric. First, it's twice as worthwhile as the Magic Vestment spell, because while a +3 armor costs 9,000 gp, a +3 weapon costs 18,000. Second, you're going to need a backup weapon to deal with ranged opponents, and this spell is a nice way to avoid shelling out money to make that ranged weapon good. And third, you can get a weapon with bonuses other than just a vanilla enhancement bonus, which allows this spell to raise its enhancement bonus. Offer to turn the Barbarian's +1 Vicious Speed Greatsword into a +4 version, and they'll be more than happy to buy you a 4th Level Pearl of Power to make it happen.

**Sending.** This is a nice utility spell and one that's probably underused. Not only can it pass an urgent message on to someone who needs to know something, but it can be used in a more usual and mundane way: keeping people apprised on what's happening to the party. Keeping tabs with the party's patron or guardian can help prevent getting blind-sided by some event happening while you're away.

**Summon Monster IV (with Sacred Summons).** Same as the third, but with better creatures.

**Spiritual Ally (Advanced Handbook).** This generally falls between a S.M. 4 and a S.M. 3 in terms of offensive power. And it doesn't soak up damage for the party. That said, this is a standard action summon, so if you can't use Sacred Summons, this is at least an option.

**Aura of Doom (Ultimate Magic.)** This is almost worse than the Archon's Aura, except for three things. First, it's a higher level spell. Ordinarily, this isn't a selling point, but it means the Resist DC will be one higher. Second, once an enemy fails their save, the only way they can get rid of the effect is to run away. And third, the aura lasts 10 minutes per level - meaning that you'll probably be able to use the same aura for multiple dungeon battles.

**Spit Venom (Ultimate Magic.)** This is a solid anti-boss spell. Against any common enemies, blinding one of them for a round while possibly sucking out a few points of CON isn't worth it. Against an end boss, blinding them without a save is alone worth the spell. Even if they pass the first fort save, incapacitating them for a round while the party gets to work is worth the spell slot.



## Level 5 Spells



This is the first spell level you can't convert something into an effective cure spell. Which is fine; this level is packed with spells you won't want to spontaneously convert.

**Breath of Life.** You have to prepare this spell – your party won't forgive you if it costs them 7,000 gp because someone dies (Raise Dead plus two Restorations.) It does heal for  $5d8+X$  damage, though, so if you're feeling lucky you can use it later in the day as a heal spell.

**Greater Command.** This would be blue, except it's basically a worse version of a different spell at this level (Greater Forbid Action) which generally does the same thing, but without allowing any subsequent saves.

**Commune.** Usually Divination will do the trick. However, if the question is important and the GM is evil, for 500 gp you can talk with an agent of your deity (who probably won't want to screw over their servant.)

**Flame Strike.** It's the Cleric's Fireball. Which is sometimes just what you want.

**Plane Shift.** A lot of people view this as something for planar adventures. But it's also a Cleric's “Get Out Of Jail Free” card. Just plane shift to the Elemental Plane of Air to regroup.

**Righteous Might.** This is a solid spell that increases your size. Which is a great thing, but you might want to have a DEX pump, since it'll reduce the number of combat reflexes you can do (since enlarging reduces DEX.)

**Scrying.** Divination is usually a better bet. This spell comes awfully late for Clerics.

**Summon Monster V (with Sacred Summons).** Even better summons than Summon Monster IV.

**Wall of Stone.** This is probably the most useful 5th level in your arsenal, and you should always prepare at least one. It's also the main reason you'll want to plunk down a large chunk of money for a Metamagic Rod of Quicken (regular) - because three quickened walls of stone per day is amazing.

**Greater Forbid Action (Ultimate Magic.)** The regular version of Forbid isn't worth the first level slot - a single target, one round duration, save or suck spell? The Greater version? Round/Level duration, one target/level, with only a save on the first round. Consider this an alternative or compliment to Wall of Stone – it can do just as good of a job at controlling combat.

## Level 6 Spells

This level is basically the Heal level - because that spell is not only more powerful than anything else at this level, but will actually warp how you prepare lower level spells as well.

Before reaching the 11<sup>th</sup> level, your biggest cure spell would fix 32 points of damage. And on reaching level 11, you can suddenly patch up 110 points worth.

So for the most part, until you get more than 1 or 2 spell slots for this level, you should just plan on prepping Heal. It isn't until later that its worth it to prep Harm, Summon Monster 6, or anything else.

## Sacred Summons Available



### Lawful Good

The bad news is that until you can cast Summon Monster 9, you're stuck with two low-level summons. The good news is that they're actually pretty decent, and can even be relevant in higher levels. Hopefully, though, your DM will either rule that Sacred Summons works with the templated animals or will allow the Shield Archon as a Summon Monster 7 (which bridges the gap nicely.)

### Lantern Archon (Summon Monster 3)

This has Aid at will. Which is actually a pretty decent spell to have at will, because it gives temporary hit points. During a battle, a Lantern Archon casting Aid on the fighter each round during a pitched battle is the same as him getting hit with a Cure Light each round. The damage output for their beams isn't incredible, but the good news is that they don't get hindered by damage reduction or AC (they use ranged touch attacks) - so at least they're still somewhat relevant in the higher levels.

### Hound Archon (Summon Monster 4)

Ironically, after a few levels, the Hound Archon gets less combat relevant than the earlier Lantern Archon - their attacks are only at +8, so beating enemy AC can quickly become a problem. The good news is that these have all the same spell like abilities of the Lantern, with the big addition of Magic Circle Against Evil.

### Chaotic Good

If you're going to try to make a non-evil Sacred Summons work RAW, this is the alignment to do it. Having to wait until 9<sup>th</sup> level to start going nuts with Summoning isn't a huge sacrifice – before then, the summons really aren't all that powerful anyway. And Chaotic Good gets two really good options.

### Bralani Azata (Summon Monster 5)

These guys have good, well rounded stats and are a good summon for their level in almost any situation. But something to never lose sight of: they can do two castings of either 6d6 Lightning Bolt and/or Cure Serious (3d8+6 hit points.) And keep in mind, you can summon the Bralani right where it needs to be to get a lined up lightning bolt. With Superior Summons, this can get pretty silly - a fifth level spell that is 24d6 worth of lightning bolts and an untold amount of melee/bow damage.

### Lillend Azata (Summon Monster 6)

Ever want to add a bard to the party? The Lillends can throw out a +2 Inspire Courage and cast as 7<sup>th</sup> level bards. They've got a lot of minor bits of usefulness they can bring to the table. They can make the wizard invisible. They can do 80 points worth of healing. They can throw out some save or suck spells. But generally, they're best at simply inspiring courage and then healing a bit after the battle ends.

## Lawful Evil Sacred Summons



At first it looks like you've got a lot of options. But the Lemure and Hell Hound probably aren't worth summoning, and all three of the 5<sup>th</sup> level options are pretty interchangeable. You don't really get any good Spell Like Abilities until you get up Summon Monster 7. Even though there aren't as many early choices for Chaotic Evil spellcasters, they've generally got the better spread.

Still, having multiple choices available from Summon Monster 5 onward can be pretty valuable. And if you do get Summon Monster 7, the Bone Devil is an absolute beast (at-will Wall of Ice for starters.)

### **Lemure (Summon Monster 2)**

These guys are pretty weak - when they attack, they don't hit often; when they hit, they don't deal much damage. About the only thing they do well is disrupt the enemy's movement; expect more, and you'll be disappointed.

### **Hell Hound (Summon Monster 4)**

Relatively weak, but still a lot better than getting a Lemure. They probably don't do enough to justify a 4<sup>th</sup> level spell, but they do have a minor area-of-effect ability for 7 damage.

### **Bearded Devil (Summon Monster 5)**

Here's where the Lawful Evil summons start get interesting. The Bearded Devil is a melee combatant through and through, so it'll be great when you can first summon it, but weaker each level. It has a reach weapon itself, so if you like, you can have it simply maneuver alongside you and give another attack of opportunity. It also has an iterative attack at a pretty decent To-Hit, along with solid damage and a bleed ability.

### **Kyton (Summon Monster 5)**

Think of the Kyton like a wildcard Bearded Devil. It has reach weapons and deals around the same damage per round. However, it becomes much weaker against Damage Reduction, and becomes much stronger with damage buffs. If you summon this before the party bard begins Inspire Courage, the average damage output goes up incredibly - since that bonus to damage and attack applies to four chain attacks per turn.

### **Xill (Summon Monster 5)**

The Xill is a full-attack machine with 5 total attacks - which means as good as Inspire Courage is on a Kyton, it's even better on a Xill. It's also the earliest choice for a Lawful Evil summon that has a ranged attack.

### **Erinyes (Summon Monster 6)**

There's a lot to like about this summon. First, she's a flying archer, which alone can be invaluable. She still has decent melee, and her hair entangling can be pretty powerful - she'll pretty much autohit with the +15 ranged touch attack, and if the opponent fails the DC 20 reflex save, they'll get entangled... and are in danger of the Erinyes taking them up in the air for a short lethal ride. Still, they're ultimately martial summons, which means they grow progressively weaker as you advance in levels.

## Chaotic Evil Sacred Summons



There aren't that many early choices, but they're all pretty good (with the possible exception of the Shadow Demon, depending on how your GM rules it working.)

### **Dretch (Summon Monster 3)**

This is arguably the most power per level available in any of the lists. Stinking Cloud is a 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell, is one of the best wizard spells at that level, and isn't available to the Cleric. The Dretch can do it as soon as it hits play - in other words, you can use Summon Monster 3 to create a Save or Suck, Area of Effect spell. The Cleric simply doesn't have anything comparable to that at all in the rest of its 3<sup>rd</sup> level spells. Anything afterwards - attacks it lands, damage it absorbs, enemies it obstructs - is just gravy.

### **Babau (Summon Monster 5)**

This summon has a longspear and a sneak attack. What's not to love? Just summon it on the other side of a foe taking on the fighter and let it tear things to shreds. This does a nice job of replacing the Dretch once the DC 13 Fort save becomes too easy to pass.

### **Shadow Demon (Summon Monster 6)**

This summon has a huge looming question mark over it: how does your DM interpret Summon Monster rules and Planar Abilities? Shadow Conjunction and Shadow Evocation involve tapping into energies of the Shadow Plane. Technically, that doesn't violate the Summon Monster rules (no conjuring, no planar travel abilities.) But "technically" doesn't mean much if the DM takes a simpler (and reasonable) stance that Summoned creatures cannot interact with outside planes at all. If they go by RAW, the Shadow Demon is absolutely insane, able to cast shadow versions of Grease, Glitterdust, Web, Obscuring Mist, Fog Cloud, and even Phantom Steed (think about that - a Summon Monster spell that ends up pseudo-summoning a creature that lasts for 10 hours). If not, you've got a pretty sad monster, since most of its best abilities have been cut out.

### **Succubus (Summon Monster 6)**

The Succubus's power is entirely based on whether Suggestion will be useful. Her main draw is the at-will Suggestion. If the enemy is a group that can all be turned against one another with craven suggestions, then she'll be amazing. If it's just one strong end boss, it'll probably be useless. She does have another boon, but it's one with a pretty severe drawback: Profane Gift. The DM will probably rule that, when the summoned monster disappears, it'll trigger the 2d6 charisma drain. This means you'll need a Restoration Spell and 100 gp to recover it - so it's something to think about for a final battle, but probably not worth it otherwise.

## Items for the Reach Cleric



### Main Weapon

The most important part of your character is the weapon. Unless you're worshipping Sheylyn or used a feat for some weapon proficiency, you're looking at a Longspear. However, you don't want to go above a +1 enhancement bonus. Instead, start adding abilities to the weapon, preparing for when Greater Magic Weapon can make it soar into the stratosphere.

**Flaming, Frost, Shock, Merciful:** These are good bonuses to start out with. They're cheap and they add a decent amount of damage.

**Spell Storing.** Eventually, third level spells become a lot less valuable (because you've got 4th, 5th, and 6th level spells to work with) and enemies are more often sporting resistances to specific elements. At that point, putting *InFLICT SERIOUS* on a weapon can be useful. Still, you're giving up a lot to get that extra damage.

**Holy.** This depends on how much evil you'll be confronting, though usually most things you'll fight will have that alignment. This can be a very good ability to add, and unlike the elemental damage additions, this ability gets better as you progress in levels.

**Speed.** The Reach Cleric concept is built off of attacks of opportunity, not iterative attacks. That said, if you find yourself spending the third round onward doing full attacks, maybe this will be a good choice for you.

**Brilliant Energy.** Expensive, but worth it. Classes with  $\frac{3}{4}$  BAB progression can sometimes have problems with hitting (especially after *Power Attack*.) *Brilliant Energy* fixes that. It doesn't effect undead or construct, though. Undead shouldn't be a problem (you're a cleric, after all) but constructs might cause issues.

### Secondary Weapon - Ranged

Sometimes you're going to need to peg something far away from you. My advice is to pack a sling. It goes off of Dex, which is unfortunate (but not the end of the world) and it uses your full strength bonus for damage. And unlike a composite bow, you don't need to jump through hoops each time your strength increases.

Starting out, a regular version will get you through the first several levels. Eventually you'll want a masterwork version until you get until level 12, when *Greater Magic Weapon* can turn it into a +3 weapon through the day.

### Secondary Weapon - Close Quarters

You might want a weapon for when you don't have space to take advantage of a reach weapon. You have two options: *One-Handed*, or *Light*. A *One-Handed* weapon has the advantage that you can wield it in both hands to get strength-and-a-half bonus on damage. *Light* has the advantage that it can be used in a grapple. Either way, the number of situations where you'll need it is pretty minor, so don't spend more than pocket change.

## Armor

Though a Chainshirt is going to your armor in the early levels, the first upgrade isn't to magical gear, but to a Mithral Breastplate. Mithral Breastplate is pretty much the same thing as a +2 Chainshirt - it gives the same armor bonus and even costs roughly the same.

The reason Mithral Breastplate is what you're shooting for is because it fits in perfectly with both Acrobatics and the cleric's proficiencies. Using Acrobatics to move through threatened squares requires you not be wearing armor that slows your movement - and Mithral Breastplate doesn't. But mithral doesn't change what armor proficiency is required, but Clerics have Medium proficiency anyway.

When it comes to enhancing the Breastplate, don't give it anything more than +1. You can use Magic Vestment to amp that number, which frees you into putting other bonuses on it. Fortification is a good place to start, since negating critical hits can save you from some really nasty problems. Invulnerability is also an option if you're not in a humanoid-heavy campaign. Then, in the higher levels, it's usually worth it to put static cost bonuses on - it costs just as much to put Energy Resistance on a +1 armor as a +9 armor. Before putting Energy Resistance on it, though, make sure you can't do with it on a ring. An Energy Resistance ring is 2/3 the cost of putting the same ability on an armor.

## Shield

You can't use a regular shield since you're wielding a two-handed weapon. You can't use a buckler since you'll be using your weapon every round (you only get the AC bonuses if you don't attack.) But that isn't to say you can't have an animated shield. Ordinarily, spending 9k on an animated shield isn't worth it. What makes it decent here is that it's a second outlet for a Magic Vestment spell, which can turn the shield into a pretty hefty AC boost.

## Stat Item - Mental

Wisdom is a secondary stat. That said, you need a Wisdom of 19 if you want to cast your 9<sup>th</sup> level spells – so you're going to need a headband of Wisdom at some point. The nice thing is, if you start with a Wisdom of 14, you've got quite a bit of breathing room – you won't need to get this until you're approaching the 9<sup>th</sup> level (or, alternatively, you can use your 8<sup>th</sup> level ability increase in Wisdom and push things back another 2 levels.)

An option in the higher levels is to tack a +2 Charisma or a +2 Intelligence on it for 6,000 gp. The charisma will give you an additional channel each day; the Intelligence will give you some additional skill points. It's not worth doing early, but in the later levels, when 6k is practically pocket change, it can be worth it.

## Stat Item - Physical

Strength is your primary stat, and you should be pushing to get a big bonus on a Belt of Strength – and you should probably get the belt up to +4 Strength before worrying about adding either of the other physical stats.

If you find yourself spending a lot of time enlarged, you might want to tack a +2 Dexterity bonus on the belt. You'll probably want a +2 Constitution bonus on there as well. Your end goal for your belt will probably end up around: +6 STR, +4 DEX, +2 CON (66,000 gp.)



## Metamagic Rods

**Lesser Extend.** For 3,000 gp, this can be an easy way to turn Magic Vestment into a day-long proposition. If you've chosen the Travel domain, this becomes even better, since it can hit Longstrider as well.

**Lesser Quicken.** You won't get quite as much usage out of this as a regular cleric, but that's only because they have a harder time fitting everything into their standard action. Still, the 35k price tag is well below what it's worth. It will let you cast utility or buff spells on top of whatever you planned to do on your turn.

If you do get this, though, you'll need to pick up the Quick Draw feat and a Weapon Chord to get the most of it. When you need to cast a quickened spell, you'd let go of the Longspear with your right hand (Free action), quick draw the rod (Free action), cast the spell (Swift action), and then drop the rod (Free action.)

**Regular Quicken.** This is too pricey for anything but the really high levels, but the ability to throw out quickened Walls of Stone and quickened Summon Monster VI is worth it.

## Other Items

**Cloak of Resistance.** You're going to have some pretty solid saves. Clerics have strong saves in the two most important types, and Reach Clerics have 14+ in the relevant stats. Still, a Cloak of Resistance will help bump those saves even further.

**Amulet of Natural Armor, Ring of Protection.** Some additional sources of AC. Since the Cost per AC is twice that of armors and shields, though, you'll want to keep both of these at a point where they're both "cheap". I wouldn't look to get even a +1 version until level 9 or 10, when 2k is a small investment.

**Dusty Rose Ioun Stone.** Same vein as the Amulet and Ring above – another way of increasing your AC, but worth it only when 5k is pocket change.

**Jingasa of the Fortunate Soldier.** It's pricey for just an AC bonus, but the ability to negate a single critical hit or sneak attack against you can be invaluable later on.

**Pearl of Power.** These should only be used if a specific spell is killing off all your low level slots. If you're at 15th level and are casting Greater Magic Weapon four times a day (one for your longspear, one for your sling, one for the barbarian's greatsword, and one for the ranger's longbow) then you probably want a 4th level pearl or two - otherwise, the only way you'll have 4th level spells available is if you prep them in higher level slots.

**Handy Hoversack.** A must-have for pretty much every character.

**Boots of Elvenkind.** You have two problems when it comes to the Acrobatics skill: it's not a class skill, and it's not based on a primary stat. Getting Boots of Elvenkind will make it easier to beat the CMD of tough enemies.

**Eyes of the Eagle.** Another skill bonus magical item, this time for Perception.

**Ring of Energy Resistance.** It can be pretty pricey, especially since you have ready access to Resist Energy. That said, it can be a nice perk in later levels.

**Ring of Counterspells.** The idea being to cast Dispel Magic into it as a way of preserving any buff spells on you versus an enemy mage. Circumstantial? Yes. But for only 4k, it's something worth thinking about for high level characters.



## Example Builds

### Mimi – Example Level 6 Reach Cleric

Mimi's creator knows she's in a group with a lot of players that love caster characters – usually, there's only one or two characters that don't mind being towards the front of a battle. The GM is strict on Sacred Summons, disallowing Celestial/Fiendish templates to qualify or allowing any monsters to the Summon Monster list. The GM has said that the campaign will go from level 6 to around level 10 and will use 15 Point Buy.

Mimi is a LG human and doesn't worship a deity. Her domains are Tactics and Fate.

Her stats: Str 19 (+2 racial, +2 item), Dex 12, Con 16 (+1 level), Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 7

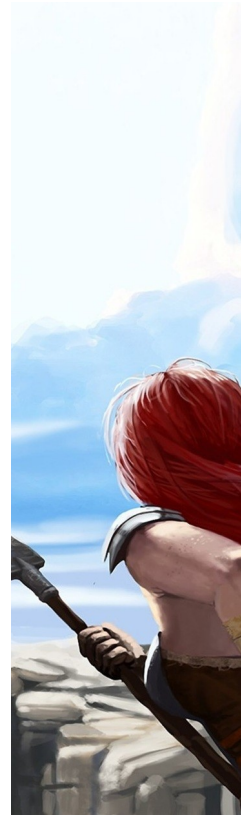
Her skill ranks are 6 Acrobatics, 6 Perception.

Her feats: Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Improved Initiative, Sacred Summons

Main Items: +1 Longspear, +2 STR Belt, Handy Hoversack, +1 Mithral Breastplate

#### Explanation

Being Lawful Good allows her to get early use of Sacred Summons – she already can do Lantern Archons, and in another level, she'll be able to bring out Hound Archons. Her stats don't allow her to do a whole lot of Attacks of Opportunity, but it's because she had to pump her CON up high to help out the party. If that's still not enough, she might have to take Toughness at level 7. Mimi's creator chose Fate instead of Luck, since she can force monsters to reroll saves against the party's numerous casters.



### Norbert – Example Level 12 Reach Cleric

Norbert's creator doesn't know what sort of party he'll be in. The GM will allow Sacred Summons to work with Celestial/Fiendish creatures, but does not allow clerics to worship abstract concepts. The GM is also strict on parties not being evil. The GM has said that the campaign go from level 12 to around level 17, and will use 20 Point Buy.

Norbert is a CG worshiper of Desna, with the Luck and Travel domains.

He has the stats, after items and level-ups: Str 24, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 18, Cha 9

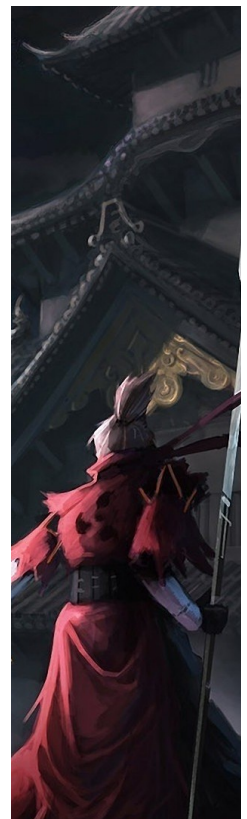
His skill ranks are 12 Acrobatics, 12 Perception

His feats are: Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Improved Initiative, Sacred Summons, Spell Focus (Conjuration), Augment Summoning, and Superior Summons

Main Items: +1 Flaming Frost Shock Longspear, Belt of +4 Str +2 Con, Lesser Metamagic Rod of Extend, Headband of +2 Wis +2 Cha, +1 Moderate Fortification Mithral Breastplate, Cloak of Resistance +2, Handy Hoversack, +10 Boots of Elvenkind

#### Explanation

Norbert specializes in Summoning. At level 12, he can pop out 2 Celestial Dire Tigers as a standard action – or, if he wants SLAs, 2 Lillends or 1d3+1 Bralani. With the boots and his ranks in Acrobatics, he'll have a +24; most monsters around that level have a CMD of about 31, so that means he'll be succeeding a decent percentage of the time. While he hasn't taken many combat feats, he's relying on his better summons to pick up the slack. He also grabbed a CHA bonus on his headband for an additional channel





## **Comparisons to a Two-Handed Cleric**

How does a Reach Cleric (we'll name her Alice) compare with a Two-Handed Weapon Cleric (we'll name him Bob) - how do they look when contrasted with one another?

Actually, they're pretty darned close, as it turns out.

### **Advantages of Bob on Paper:**

He's either got higher Strength or higher Constitution by +1 (possibly both.) Bob can dump dex, which means lets him spend a few more points on the other physical stats.

He's got a higher To-Hit rate. This is partly because his strength is higher, and partly because Bob's more likely to take martial feats - he's likely to take feats like Weapon Focus over Sacred Summons.

### **Advantages of Alice on Paper:**

She's got a higher AC - while Bob might even dump Dexterity, she's got it at 14.

She's capable of more attacks through Attacks of Opportunity

She has a higher Initiative. Even if Bob takes Improved Initiative, he's still got a lower Dex score.

She's more likely to have spellcaster feats that Bob hasn't taken.

### **An Actual Battle, Level 10 Characters**

Let's say either Alice or Bob is in a battle alongside a Sword and Board Fighter, an Archer Ranger, and a Wizard. They're up against six Salamanders, but two of the Salamanders are wielding crossbows.

Initiative is rolled, and we'll say that Alice and Bob both do well and get to go before the salamanders.

#### ***Round 1 – Heroes' Turn***

Alice and Bob would both probably do the same thing on round 1: cast a spell. Maybe a Wall of Stone if they're feeling nervous, a Summon Monster, or just a self-buff spell if they want to get aggressive.

#### ***Round 1 – Salamanders' Turn***

However, things start to go differently when the enemies attack. Alice gets attacks of opportunities against any Salamander that approaches - and with melee foes, she'll probably get all three possible.

#### ***Round 2 – Heroes' Turn***

On the second turn, Bob would probably full attack before 5-foot stepping away (being nice and letting the archer or wizard get decent shots at the enemy.)

Alice, though? She'd use Acrobatics to get into a favorable position - ideally one that would require the Salamanders to once again approach her. Chances are, the acrobatics will go without a hitch - even if she fails the acrobatics check against one of them, they still have to hit her on the attack of opportunity; worst case, if she's unlucky she gets hit by an attack. After she arrives, she casts a second spell.

#### ***Round 2 – Salamanders' Turn***

On the Salamanders turn, they 5-foot step in against Bob and do full attacks. Against Alice, they can charge her, but they'll only get one attack each (and provide Alice with more attacks of opportunity.)

## **Battle Summary So Far**

After two rounds, Alice is clearly out-performing Bob: she's done more damage thanks to her attacks of opportunities, taken less damage, and even had the opportunity to cast a second spell.

However, the final portion of the battle goes to Bob. When the melee salamanders die, it's time to take out the two ranged combatants. Alice doesn't do as much damage as Bob when she does regular attacks, nor does she hit quite as reliably. Granted, this difference is only +1 or +2, but that's still worth considering. Without the attacks of opportunity, Alice isn't quite as good as Bob at cleaning up the ranged foes.

## **What's the Trade Off?**

Basically, the Reach Cleric is better at handling throngs and is better at spellcasting (even if they have the same Wisdom score.) When Alice was outnumbered, her damage output went up to impressive amounts. And during battle, finding the opportunity to cast spells wasn't a problem.

The trade-off is against large foes and enemies that don't want to get in close. In those situations, the Two-Handed Weapon Cleric is better.

***Why the tradeoff is worth it.*** The places where Bob is better, he's not better by much; the places where Alice is better, she's better by a mile. Alice is just a shade short of functioning as well as Bob in straight-forward fighting - she's possibly missing a point or two of strength, and possibly missing a feat or two. Other than that, she's capable of simply Power Attacking away the same as Bob. But the places where Alice shines - getting spellcasting while doing damage, handling multiple attackers - Bob simply can't do at all.

## **Comparison to a Caster Cleric**

This time, Alice will be compared against a Caster Cleric named Charlie. Charlie doesn't do many martial actions in combat. He's pumped his Wisdom up to 24, and the rest of his stats are concerned with survival, not dealing damage. While he has a weapon, he'd much rather stick to the back and cast his spells.

### **Advantages of Charlie on Paper:**

The DC to resist his spells is +3 or so higher.

He gets a handful of extra spells each day.

He can prepare a wider variety of spells (since he's not dissuaded from Save-Or-Suck spells)

He has more feats dedicated to improving his spells.

### **Advantages of Alice on Paper:**

She can do combat damage.

She serves as a protector of the party, not someone who needs protecting.

She's better at casting her spells in dangerous situations.

## **An Actual Battle, Level 10 Characters**

Let's create the same battle - 6 Salamanders, two that use crossbows.

### ***Round 1 – Heroes' Turn***

Charlie's going to cast a spell. Probably Wall of Stone or something similar.

### ***Round 1 – Salamanders' Turn***

The Salamanders charge. Charlie is staying out of the way.

### ***Round 2 – Heroes' Turn***

Charlie casts another spell. Maybe a Summon Monster through Sacred Summons.

### ***Round 2 – Salamanders' Turn***

More Salamander aggression – which hopefully Charlie is managing to stay away from.

## **Battle Summary So Far**

Charlie has cast spells just as fast as Alice, though he hasn't done any additional damage. Towards the end of battle, Charlie and Alice go into completely different roles. Charlie is more passive, because if the battle is already won, it's time to start looking to conserve resources. If the choice comes down to letting the fighter take 8 points of damage before finishing off the last foe, or using a third level spell to incapacitate the enemy, it's better to just let the fighter deal the killing blow and use a first level spell to heal him afterwards.

Alice, on the other hand, simply hunts down the enemies and attacks them.

## **What's the Trade Off?**

In the first two rounds? The trade goes entirely to Alice's favor. She casts just as many spells, but also deals about around 150 points of damage in 5 attacks.

Later in the battle? Charlie's battle will take longer to finish; while Alice and Charlie are both casting spells, Alice is doing damage alongside those spells and is far more help in a fight that's winding down. Now, having a battle take longer isn't necessarily a problem. It does, however, mean that it's more likely that Charlie will be spending an extra spell or two; maybe he has to throw out one additional control spell while the other characters finish killing things off, maybe he has to throw out an additional cure spell to fix some additional points of damage.

After the battle? This is where Charlie gets his due. He's coming out of the battle with more spells for subsequent fights - after all, he started out with more. Alice is less able to fight multiple fights with full intensity before running out of spells (though, in fairness, with enough fights, Charlie breaks down entirely.)

***Why the tradeoff is worth it.*** This might be a bit harder to put a finger on at first. Does Charlie require more spells per fight? Probably... but are those additional spells per fight more or less than the bonus spells he gets for having a high wisdom?

An easier way of looking at it is this: What would Charlie have to do, spellcasting-wise, to replicate what Alice does? She did 150 points of damage in two rounds, while still casting each round. You could say that's a fireball worth of damage... but it's more like a quickened fireball, since she still got to do her usual spellcasting.

So I'd say the tradeoff is worth it, simply because the additional spells-per-day don't overcome that level of bonus damage.

## **Summary**

In the end, a Reach Cleric is a cross between a Two-Handed Weapon Cleric and a Caster Cleric. It keeps almost all of the Two-Handed Weapon Cleric's offensive potential (and surpasses it in a lot of situations) while keeping its standard actions free for spellcasting.

## **Other Guides by KBrewer:**

*Note: You may have to download this PDF to be able to follow the hyperlinks; Google Docs doesn't present the links as clickable on some computers.*

[Shadow Conjuration - Guide and Reference Manual](#)

[Shadow Evocation: More Than Just Blasts \(A Guide\)](#)

[Thus She Spoke: A Words of Power Sorceress Guide](#)

[Brewer's GM Guide to Campaign Design](#)

[Brewer's Guide to Undeath - A Necromancer's Handbook](#)