



**THE HOLY  
RULEBOOK**

HOW TO PLAY

**TOTEMS + TABOOS**

# 1. What's in the box?



**60 soul cubes**, each representing a soul for you to convert, willingly or unwillingly.

**36 totem blocks**, in 6 different colors. Stack them to grow your tower and gain power.

**6 spiritual guides**, one for each color, with powerful abilities. Sacrifice them in times of need.

**162 cards**, or 6 decks of 27 commandments to gain followers, or sabotage the other gods.

**1 extra die** for single player game

**6 cheat sheets**



## 2.Souls, servants, clerics, and shrines



Any religion needs **followers**. Luckily, there is a whole swarm of souls just waiting for a god to show them the way.

Once you claim a soul, move one of these dice to your end of the table. They can become a 'cleric', 'servant', or 'shrine'.

### CLERIC



Needed to **play commandment cards**. You can use each cleric only once during your turn.

When a cleric dies, it becomes a shrine.

### SERVANT



Needed to **upgrade your tower** and **play certain cards**. They can also be used only once during your turn.

When a servant dies, it's soul goes back into the pile.

### SHRINE



Demonstrate how powerful your religion is. You need a certain amount of shrines before your tower can gain a level.

You can only get a shrine when one of your clerics dies.

### 3. The colors of religion



As a god, you get to choose the **core principles** of your religion, each represented by a color. There are 6 in total: **LIFE** (yellow) or **DEATH** (purple), **FAITH** (orange) or **TRUTH** (blue), **FEAR** (green) or **LOVE** (red)



LIFE is a miracle to be celebrated. It inspires **souls to convert**, and clerics to **abandon their faith** in the other gods.

focus on



FEAR is a powerful motivator and allows you to **enslave** others. Terrorized souls are especially adept at **tower building**.

focus on



TRUTH involves considering all the different angles. New insights often lead to **sudden, massive changes** in perception.

focus on



DEATH is not the end, but a fate we must all suffer. Deathly rituals harness the **power of the dead** and affect **all players**.

focus on



LOVE can be hypnotizing, can bring people together or drive them apart. Use it to **thwart your opponents**, if you are prepared to make the **sacrifice**.

focus on



FAITH means surrendering to the Word of God, no matter what. Gods of FAITH like to **roll the dice** and **draw cards**.

focus on



## 4. Building your tower

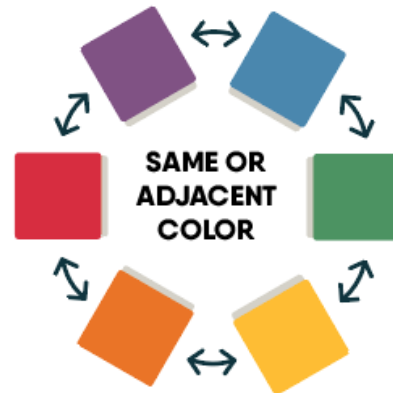
Growing your religion means upgrading your tower, one block at a time. **The first player to reach six levels wins the game, immediately.** For each additional level, you need an increasing number of shrines and available servants:

				RESOURCES NEEDED TO BUILD								
TOWER LEVEL	6 <sup>th</sup> totem	VI	10 shrines	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕
			5 servants	#	#	#	#	#				
	5 <sup>th</sup> totem	V	8 shrines	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	
			4 servants	#	#	#	#					
	4 <sup>th</sup> totem	IV	6 shrines	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕			
			3 servants	#	#	#						
3 <sup>rd</sup> totem	III	4 shrines	✕	✕	✕	✕						
		2 servants	#	#								
2 <sup>nd</sup> totem	II	2 shrines	✕	✕								
		1 servant	#									
1 <sup>st</sup> totem	I	0 shrines										
		0 servants										

You can only add a totem block of the **same or adjacent color**.

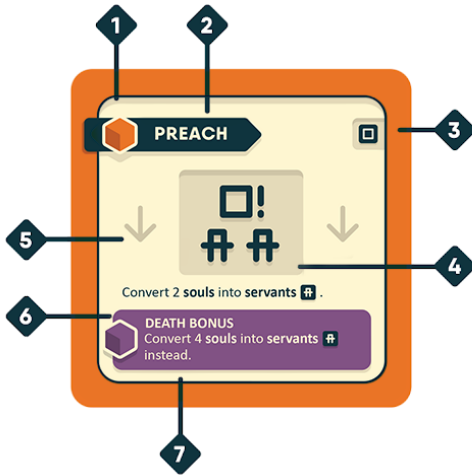
For example, on top of a blue totem block, you can only build another blue block, a purple, or a green one.

Building means taking a block from the resource pile and stacking it on top of your existing tower. With many gods competing, some **colors may run out**, forcing you to choose a different path.



# 5. Playing your cards

Each color has a deck of 27 cards with 6 unique commandments and 1 miracle.



1. card **type** (here: impacts you)
2. card **name**
3. **cost** to play (here: needs 1 cleric)
4. **illustration** of the effect
5. card **level** (here: level 1)
6. **description** of the effect
7. **bonus advantage** that is triggered when your tower includes the indicated color (here: extra powerful effect if you own a purple totem block)

The **level** of the card shows you **need that many blocks of that color** in order to play the card.

I

3 per color,  
needs 1 block to play

II

2 per color,  
needs 2 blocks to play

III

1 per color,  
needs 3 blocks to play

There are 4 different **types of cards**:



Cards that affect **only you**.



Cards that affect **another player**.



Cards that affect **all players**.



**Miracle cards** affect **all players** who own a block of that color.

## 6. Spiritual guides



When you play 3 or more action cards of the same color in a single turn, you summon a spiritual guide with a powerful ability to assist you as long as they are under your control.

There are only 6 guides in total. When another god plays 3 cards of the same color, they can steal away the guide. Luckily, you can sacrifice them at any time to perform a unique action. When you do, move it to the side of the table.



# 7. Playing the game - 2 to 4 players

## 7.1 Setting up



- Pile all the soul cubes and totem blocks in the center of the table.
- Arrange the playing cards as 6 shuffled decks, one for each color, around the pile of blocks in the correct order: yellow > green > blue > purple > red > orange.
- Place the 6 spiritual guides within reach.

## 7.2 Starting colors

Every player **chooses a color by taking a block from the pile**, without any of the other players looking. When everyone has their starting block, reveal it, place it at your end of the table (this will be the base of your tower) and **draw 3 cards of that color** as your starting hand. Should you draw a **miracle card**, replace it, then shuffle it back into the draw pile. Each color starts with some additional resources:



**2 servants + 1 shrine**



**4 servants**



**2 clerics + 1 shrines**



**2 shrines**



**roll 3 soul cubes**



**4 clerics**



## 7.3 Starting player

The starting player is determined by the chosen colors in the following order:



In case of a tie, the player who most recently visited a place of worship (temple, mosque, church, ... ) may start the game.

The game proceeds in **clockwise turns**.

## 7.4 Playing a turn

During your turn, you can **play as many cards**, and **buy as many block as you can**. Every action has a cost, and most cards require available clerics or servants. You can only **use each cleric and servant once each turn**, so you will need to choose what you want to do, and in what order.



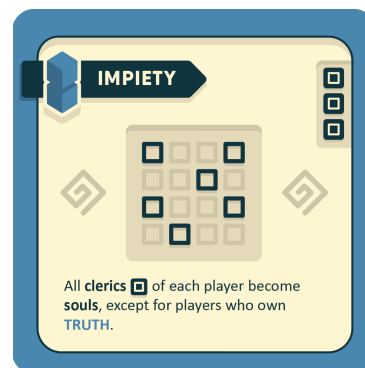
1. Your tower is the center of the action
2. Keep **available** servants and clerics on one side.
3. After being **used**, move servants and clerics to the other side of your tower.
4. Shrines cannot be used for action, so keep them separate

Cards may change servants into clerics, shrines, or vice versa. This does NOT change whether they are 'available' or 'used'. Newly recruited souls can be used immediately.

For example: to play this card, you need 3 available clerics (cost) and 2 blue totem blocks (level).

After the card has had its effect, you can no longer use those 3 clerics, and the card is put into the **discard pile**.

Even if a **card's effect is cancelled** by another player, it still goes to the discard pile and the clerics or servants of its cost are 'used'.



Playing **three cards of the same color** during a single turn, summons the spiritual guide of that color. Take it from the side of the table, or from another player, and place it near your tower.



## 7.5 Skipping a turn

At the start of your turn, you may decide to **skip it** and do one of the following instead:

- Convert one **soul** to be your **servant**.



- Promote one of your **servants** to become a **cleric**.



- Sacrifice one of your **clerics** to get a **shrine**.



## 7.6 Ending your turn

At the end of your turn, you can either:

- **Draw one card** of a color in your tower, or
- **Discard your hand and draw 3 cards** of any combination of colors in your tower
- **Draw 3 cards if your hand is empty**

Your **maximum hand size is 6 cards**. You cannot draw any additional cards if you already have 6 in your hand.



If you draw a **MIRACLE** card, play it **immediately**.

After it had its effect, put it in the discard pile and draw a new card of the same color.

Put all your used servants and clerics back with the available ones. You can use these again next turn.

## 8. Playing the game - SOLO

### 8.1 Setting up



- Remove the level 3 cards from the game.
- Establish the 'passive religions':
  - 6 tower, 5 blocks each, in the color order as shown
  - put 8 shrines behind each one, and the shuffled decks in front
- Keep within reach: remaining soul cubes, solo play die, and the spiritual guides.

The game starts the same way as multiplayer:

- Choose a **starting color** and take a totem block from 1 of the passive religions.
- **Draw 3 cards** of that color and take your additional resources.

### 8.2 Your turn

Play your turn as you would in multiplayer game, but take the following into account:

- When upgrading your tower, you can take a totem block from a passive religion, and draw a card of that color
- Cards that target another player, target one of the passive religions.
- Cards that target each player, target all 6 passive religions, and you.
- Miracle cards apply to the passive religions too (gaining clerics equal to the number of totem blocks of that color).
- End your turn by drawing cards like you would in multiplayer.

## 8.3 The passive religions

After your turn, **roll the single player die**. The passive religion of the rolled color gains resources equal to the starting resources for that color (see 7.2 *Starting colors*).

After this, it is your turn again.

## 8.4 Winning solo game

**You win if your tower reaches 6 levels before all the soul cubes are depleted.**

When you roll the single player die between your turns, and there are not enough souls to give that passive religion its resources, you lose the game.

## 8.5 Alternate difficulties

By changing the set-up, you can make the game easier or more challenging:

### Stairway to heaven (easy)

The passive religions start with **4 totem blocks and 6 shrines each**, which also increases the soul cubes pile. Try this easy to win mode to get to know the cards and discover the mechanics.

### Highway to hell (hard)

The passive religions start with **6 totem blocks and 10 shrines each**, which decreases the soul cubes pile. Few have succeeded in this challenging mode. Try every dirty trick and search for hidden combos across the different colors to win this mode. Sometimes counterintuitive actions can have incredible results.