

paladin 5e level guide

Paladin 5e Level Guide: Mastering Your Divine Warrior

paladin 5e level guide is essential for any player eager to harness the full potential of this iconic class in Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition. Paladins are the shining knights of the game, blending martial prowess with divine magic to protect, heal, and smite their foes. Whether you're a new player stepping into the armored boots of a holy warrior or a seasoned adventurer looking to optimize your build, understanding how to progress through the paladin's levels is key to maximizing effectiveness and roleplaying opportunities.

In this guide, we'll explore the ins and outs of leveling a paladin, from choosing the right abilities and spells to mastering the core features that make this class so beloved. Along the way, we'll weave in tips for multiclassing, feat selections, and how to synergize your paladin's divine powers with your party's needs.

Understanding the Paladin's Core Identity

Paladins in 5e are a unique hybrid of front-line fighters and divine casters. Their strength lies not only in their sword arm but also in their ability to channel holy power through spells and auras. The paladin's class features evolve significantly as they gain levels, making early choices crucial for later success.

Hit Points and Proficiencies

Starting as a paladin, you gain a solid hit die of d10 per level, making you one of the sturdier classes in D&D 5e. Your proficiency in all armor and shields means you're built to stand in the thick of battle. Additionally, your weapon proficiencies cover simple and martial weapons, giving you a wide range of combat options.

Saving Throws and Skills

Paladins have proficiency in Wisdom and Charisma saving throws, reflecting their spiritual resilience and force of personality. For skills, you can choose two from Athletics, Insight, Intimidation, Medicine, Persuasion, and Religion. These choices can define your paladin's role both in combat and social interactions, making the early skill selection important for your character's flavor and utility.

Leveling Up: Key Features at Each Stage

The progression of a paladin in 5e is marked by milestones where new abilities and spells significantly enhance your capabilities. Understanding these level thresholds helps you plan your

build and anticipate when your character will gain new powers.

Levels 1-4: Foundation and Early Power

- **Level 1:** Paladins begin with the powerful Divine Sense and Lay on Hands features. Divine Sense allows you to detect celestial, fiendish, or undead presences nearby, which is great for exploration and roleplay. Lay on Hands lets you heal yourself or allies, giving you early battlefield utility.
- **Level 2:** You gain access to Spellcasting and Divine Smite. Spellcasting opens up a new dimension of combat options and utility, while Divine Smite lets you expend spell slots to deal extra radiant damage on weapon hits, making you deadly against evil foes.
- **Level 3:** This is where you choose your Sacred Oath, a defining subclass that shapes your paladin's abilities and role. Whether you pick the Oath of Devotion, Vengeance, or another option, your oath grants unique spells and features that make your paladin distinct.
- **Level 4:** Ability Score Improvement (ASI) or feat choice becomes available, allowing you to boost your primary stats or pick a feat that enhances your combat or utility capabilities.

Levels 5-10: Growth and Specialization

- **Level 5:** Extra Attack arrives, letting you strike twice when you attack, significantly increasing your damage output.
- **Level 6:** Your Sacred Oath feature deepens, often granting powerful auras or additional smite options. For example, Oath of Devotion grants Aura of Protection, which adds your Charisma modifier to saving throws for you and allies within 10 feet.
- **Level 7:** You gain access to 2nd-level spell slots and improved Divine Smite damage.
- **Level 8:** Another ASI or feat choice lets you refine your build further.
- **Level 9:** You unlock 3rd-level spell slots, opening access to impactful spells like Aura of Vitality or Revivify.
- **Level 10:** Your oath's capstone feature typically enhances your presence and resilience, such as Aura of Courage, which makes you and your allies immune to fear.

Levels 11-20: Mastery and Legendary Power

- **Levels 11-14:** You continue gaining higher-level spell slots and oath features that increase your versatility and party support.
- **Level 15:** Your Sacred Oath often grants potent abilities that can turn the tide of battle, such as improved smite effects or powerful protective auras.
- **Level 16:** Another ASI or feat selection allows for fine-tuning your character.
- **Level 17-20:** At these pinnacle levels, you receive your highest level spell slots (up to 5th-level spells), and your Divine Smite damage reaches its peak. The capstone feature at level 20, often called "Sacred Oath Feature" or "Improved Aura," grants you maximum influence on the battlefield, solidifying your role as a divine champion.

Choosing the Right Sacred Oath

Your Sacred Oath defines much of your paladin's flavor and function. Each oath offers a distinct playstyle and thematic focus.

Oath of Devotion

The classic knightly archetype, Devotion paladins emphasize honor, protection, and holy justice. Their spells tend to be supportive and defensive, and their auras boost saving throws and resist fear.

Oath of Vengeance

Focused on punishing evil, Vengeance paladins excel at single-target damage and mobility. Their features allow them to mark foes and chase down enemies relentlessly.

Oath of the Ancients

These paladins are protectors of nature and light, blending defensive magic with healing and crowd control.

Other Oaths

Expansions and sourcebooks have introduced additional oaths like Oath of Conquest, Oath of Redemption, and more, each offering unique thematic abilities and spells to suit different campaign styles and character concepts.

Spellcasting Tips for Paladin Progression

Though paladins have a limited spell list compared to full casters, their spells can be game-changers when used wisely.

Prioritize Buffs and Utility

Paladin spells like **Bless**, **Shield of Faith**, and **Aid** amplify your and your party's survivability. These spells often require concentration, so managing this resource is crucial.

Healing and Support

Spells such as *Cure Wounds* and *Lesser Restoration* ensure you can keep allies on their feet without relying solely on your Lay on Hands pool.

Smite Synergy

Your Divine Smite ability boosts damage significantly, especially when combined with spells that improve hit chances or add extra damage types, like *Hunter's Mark* (through multiclassing or feats) or *Magic Weapon*.

Optimizing Ability Scores and Feats

Paladins typically prioritize Strength (for melee attacks) and Charisma (for spellcasting and class features). Constitution is also important to sustain your front-line role.

Ability Score Progression

- **Strength:** Your primary stat for weapon attacks.
- **Charisma:** Powers your spells, Divine Smite damage, and important auras.
- **Constitution:** Boosts your hit points and concentration checks.

Feats to Consider

- **Great Weapon Master** or **Shield Master:** Depending on your chosen combat style.
- **Resilient (Constitution):** Helps maintain concentration on spells.
- **Sentinel** or **Polearm Master:** For battlefield control.
- **War Caster:** Improves spellcasting in melee and concentration.

Multiclassing and Synergies

Paladin multiclassing can open exciting avenues to boost your combat and spellcasting capabilities.

Paladin/Sorcerer

Combining paladin with sorcerer creates a potent “smite spam” build, thanks to sorcerer’s spell slot flexibility and metamagic options. This build maximizes damage output while retaining frontline durability.

Paladin/Warlock

This combo adds flavorful eldritch powers and invocations, enhancing utility and damage with spells like *Hex* and *Eldritch Blast*.

Paladin/Fighter

Adding a few fighter levels grants extra attacks, Action Surge, and improved combat maneuvers, perfect for a more martial-focused paladin.

Playing Your Paladin: Role and Strategy

A paladin excels as a tank, damage dealer, and party buffer. Understanding when to switch between these roles can make you invaluable in any adventuring group.

Combat Strategy

- Use Divine Smite on critical hits or against fiends and undead to maximize damage.
- Position yourself to protect squishier party members.
- Manage your spell slots carefully between smiting and casting buffs or heals.

Roleplaying Your Paladin

Your Sacred Oath offers rich roleplaying hooks. Whether you're a zealous defender of justice or a vengeful avenger, weaving your oath's ideals into your character's decisions adds depth to your gaming experience.

Mastering the paladin in D&D 5e requires balancing martial skill with divine magic, and this paladin 5e level guide aims to help you make informed decisions as you rise from a fledgling knight to a legendary champion. Embrace your role as a beacon of hope and justice, and your adventures will be as thrilling as they are heroic.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the best subclass for a Paladin in 5e for maximizing

damage?

The Oath of Vengeance is often considered the best subclass for maximizing damage in Paladin 5e, due to its abilities like Vow of Enmity which grants advantage on attack rolls against a chosen enemy.

At what levels do Paladins gain their key class features in 5e?

Paladins gain key features such as Divine Smite at level 2, their Sacred Oath at level 3, Extra Attack at level 5, Aura of Protection at level 6, and Improved Divine Smite at level 11.

How should I allocate ability scores for a Paladin in 5e?

Prioritize Strength and Charisma for a Paladin to maximize melee combat effectiveness and spellcasting. Constitution is also important for survivability.

What are the recommended feats for a Paladin leveling guide in 5e?

Popular feats include Great Weapon Master or Polearm Master for damage, Shield Master for defense, and War Caster for better concentration on spells and opportunity attacks.

How does Divine Smite scale as a Paladin levels up in 5e?

Divine Smite allows a Paladin to expend spell slots to deal extra radiant damage. The damage increases with higher-level spell slots, making it scale well as you gain more spell slots at higher levels.

What spells should a Paladin focus on learning throughout their levels?

Paladins should focus on utility and buff spells like Bless, Shield of Faith, and Cure Wounds early on, and later powerful spells like Aura of Vitality and Holy Weapon.

How important is Charisma for a Paladin and why?

Charisma is very important because it affects the Paladin's spellcasting ability, saving throw DCs, and the Aura of Protection bonus, which adds Charisma modifier to all saving throws for the Paladin and nearby allies.

When should a Paladin multiclass for optimal leveling in 5e?

Many players multiclass Paladins with Sorcerer or Warlock around levels 6-8 to gain spellcasting flexibility and additional features, but it's important to maintain enough Paladin levels to keep key features like Aura of Protection.

What is the recommended leveling path for a Paladin 5e from level 1 to 20?

Start with Paladin levels up to 6 to gain core features and Aura of Protection, then consider subclass features at level 3. Continue leveling Paladin for Improved Divine Smite at 11 and extra auras at higher levels, optionally multiclassing after level 6 for additional abilities.

Additional Resources

Paladin 5e Level Guide: A Comprehensive Analysis for Optimal Character Progression

paladin 5e level guide serves as an essential resource for players seeking to maximize their effectiveness and enjoyment when playing a paladin in Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition. The paladin class straddles the line between martial prowess and divine magic, offering a unique gameplay experience that combines frontline combat with spellcasting and healing capabilities. Understanding the nuances of leveling up a paladin, including subclass choices, spells, and ability score prioritization, is crucial for building a character that excels both in combat and roleplaying scenarios.

This article delves into the intricacies of paladin progression, analyzing each level's benefits, fundamental features, and how to optimize your character to fit various playstyles. By exploring core mechanics and strategic considerations, this paladin 5e level guide aims to provide a professional and investigative perspective on how to navigate the leveling process effectively.

Understanding the Paladin Class in 5e

The paladin class in 5e is known primarily for its blend of divine magic and melee combat capabilities. Unlike pure spellcasters, paladins rely on a combination of heavy armor, martial weapons, and a limited but potent selection of spells and abilities granted by their sacred oaths. Their core strength lies in versatility—being able to frontline as a tank, heal and support allies, and dish out considerable damage.

Leveling up a paladin unlocks new features that enhance these capabilities, with the pace of spell slot acquisition, divine smite progression, and aura improvements all playing critical roles. Players must carefully consider how to allocate ability score improvements, choose their subclass, and manage spell selection to maintain a balanced and effective character.

Level-by-Level Breakdown of Paladin Progression

To fully grasp the scope of paladin advancement, this section will provide a detailed overview of key levels and milestones, highlighting the features that shape gameplay.

- **Level 1:** Paladins begin with proficiency in all armor and shields, simple and martial weapons, and gain the Lay on Hands healing pool. This resource is essential for early survivability and

utility.

- **Level 2:** Divine Smite becomes available, allowing paladins to expend spell slots to deal radiant damage on weapon hits, significantly boosting damage output.
- **Level 3:** The subclass, or Sacred Oath, is chosen. This decision greatly influences the paladin's role, with options like Oath of Devotion, Oath of the Ancients, and Oath of Vengeance offering distinct thematic and mechanical benefits.
- **Level 5:** Extra Attack is unlocked, allowing two attacks per Attack action, which considerably improves combat effectiveness. Additionally, paladins gain access to 2nd-level spells, expanding their spellcasting versatility.
- **Levels 6-10:** Aura of Protection at level 6 is a defining feature, granting a bonus to saving throws equal to the paladin's Charisma modifier for themselves and nearby allies. Other subclass features also develop during this range.
- **Levels 11-20:** Further improvements include Aura of Courage at level 10, additional ability score improvements, improved Divine Smite damage, and powerful capstone abilities unique to each subclass.

Choosing the Right Subclass for Your Paladin

The paladin subclass choice, made at level 3, is a pivotal moment impacting the character's identity and gameplay style. Each subclass offers a set of features that complement different builds and party roles.

Oath of Devotion

Often considered the classic paladin archetype, the Oath of Devotion emphasizes purity, protection, and smiting evil. Its features bolster defensive capabilities and provide spells that support allies and hinder enemies. This subclass suits players who want a straightforward, righteous warrior with strong defensive auras.

Oath of the Ancients

Focusing on nature and light, the Oath of the Ancients provides an emphasis on resilience and crowd control. It offers unique spells like Misty Step and aura features that grant resistance to various damage types, making it ideal for players who prefer a more defensive and supportive role.

Oath of Vengeance

This subclass caters to players seeking an aggressive, damage-focused paladin. The Oath of Vengeance grants abilities that enhance mobility and single-target damage, such as the Vow of Enmity, which imposes advantage on attack rolls against a chosen enemy.

Spellcasting and Ability Score Prioritization

Spellcasting is integral to the paladin's toolkit but differs from dedicated casters. Paladins have a limited number of spell slots but can use Divine Smite to convert those slots into damage. Therefore, selecting spells that provide utility, healing, and occasional control is more beneficial than focusing solely on offensive spells.

Key Spells to Consider

- **Bless:** A low-level buff that improves attack rolls and saving throws for multiple allies.
- **Shield of Faith:** Provides a temporary boost to AC, enhancing survivability.
- **Find Steed:** Summons a loyal mount, useful for mobility and roleplaying.
- **Wrathful Smite:** Adds psychic damage and a fear effect to attacks, combining offense and control.

Ability Scores

Charisma is the primary ability score for paladins, influencing spellcasting, Divine Smite damage, and crucial saving throw bonuses via Aura of Protection. Strength often serves as the secondary focus due to the class's reliance on melee weapons, although some builds favor Dexterity for finesse weapons.

A typical ability score priority might look like this:

1. Charisma
2. Strength
3. Constitution (for survivability)

Allocating ability score improvements (ASIs) at levels 4, 8, 12, 16, and 19 should emphasize boosting Charisma first, followed by Strength or Constitution depending on the desired balance between offense and durability.

Strategic Tips for Maximizing Paladin Effectiveness

Optimizing a paladin requires more than just understanding features and spells; it involves tactical decisions during combat and roleplay.

Resource Management

Divine Smite is a powerful damage tool but consumes spell slots that could otherwise be used for utility spells. Balancing when to use smites versus spellcasting is essential, especially during prolonged adventuring days.

Positioning and Aura Utilization

Paladins gain several aura effects that benefit allies within a 10 to 30-foot radius. Staying close to teammates maximizes these advantages, particularly Aura of Protection and Aura of Courage, which can turn the tide in difficult encounters.

Feats and Multiclassing

While feats such as Great Weapon Master or Shield Master can enhance combat prowess, multiclassing options like dipping into sorcerer for additional spell slots or fighter for Action Surge can add versatility. However, these choices often delay key paladin features and should be considered carefully.

The paladin 5e level guide underscores the importance of deliberate planning and adaptability throughout the character's progression. The interplay between martial ability, spellcasting, and subclass features creates a rich and rewarding experience for players who commit to mastering its complexities.

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