



# THIS MIRACLE

An American Freeform game by Nick Fortugno and Lizzie Stark

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>This Miracle Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>How to Use this Script</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>A Fast Overview</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Detailed Walk-through</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Act 1: Building the Religion .....	14
Act 2: The Pilgrimage .....	17
The Pervasive <i>This Miracle</i> Expansion .....	23
<b>Game Materials</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Facilitator Master Cheat Sheets</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Facilitator Summary of Ceremony and Myths</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Mythic Info Sheets</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Ceremony Elements</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>Character Sheets</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>Pervasive Game Sheets</b> .....	<b>54</b>

## **THIS MIRACLE SUMMARY**

How do religions emerge over time, and what do they mean to the faithful? *This Miracle* explores religion and its place within human society with storytelling, roleplaying, and arts and crafts.

During the first part of *This Miracle*, players work in small groups to build a set of religious myths, ceremonies, and artifacts\* that are swapped from group to group to simulate how religions emerge over time. During the second part, participants enact the new religion as characters undertaking a religious pilgrimage. During the pilgrimage, they will try to work out their personal dilemmas through interacting with the divine.

In this game, you will portray an archetype, and a character that draws from that archetype. You'll also have the opportunity to make cool stories and cooler ceremonies, unleash your inner child with some craft projects, and consider how religion can be transformative.

This American freeform game incorporates elements from Fastaval-style freeform, US indie storytelling games, and Norwegian Larp Factory-style larps. It is a game about storytelling, spirituality, and how on the journey toward self-discovery, you are never alone.

\*Afterwards, these artifacts may be displayed as part of a larger pervasive game

## **At a Glance**

*Duration:* 4-5 hours

*Number of players:* 6-12 players +3 facilitators

*Genre:* Mythic storytelling and spiritual pilgrimage

*Player type:* You are brimming with secret creativity, and don't mind improvising story and character elements in a supportive environment. You also aren't afraid to play hard, and even risk embarrassment for a role. You love stories and want to think deeply about religion.

*Game master type:* You are great at thinking on the fly and pulling story elements together with your co-facilitators to create the best player experience. You're also good at creating a reverent tone among players, and a caring environment in which players feel they can go hard and still be supported. You are comfortable both explaining the methods of the game, and playing a character that will perform some light facilitation tasks from within the storyline.

## **About the authors:**

**Nick Fortugno** is a designer of digital and real-world games and co-founder of the game company Playmatics. Fortugno has been designer, writer, and project manager on dozens of games, serving as lead designer on the downloadable blockbuster *Diner Dash*, award-winning serious game *Ayiti: The Cost of Life*, CableFAX award winning *Breaking Bad: The Interrogation*, and MUSE award winner *Body/Mind/Change* as well as games with Red Bull, Disney, AMC, the Red Cross/Crescent, PBS, and USAID. Nick is co-founder of the Come Out & Play street games festival, and teaches game design and interactive narrative at Parsons The New School of Design.

**Lizzie Stark** is a journalist and nonfiction writer who has written two books, *Leaving Mundania* (Chicago Review Press, 2012), about the world of larp, and *Pandora's DNA* (Chicago Review Press, 2014), about the history and science of the breast cancer genes. She also has a monograph out, *Pocket Guide to American Freeform* (Bundle of Holding, 2014), and she served as co-editor of the collection of Norwegian larp scripts, *Larps from the Factory* (Rollespilsakademiet, 2013). She's designed two live games, *The Curse*, a freeform about hereditary breast cancer, and *In Residency*, a larp about intrigue at an artists' colony. She blogs about larp at [LeavingMundania.com](http://LeavingMundania.com). In her free time she enjoys spectating beards, hatching feminist conspiracies, and sipping cocktails seasoned with her GM vial of players' tears.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gaming is a communal activity, so it's no surprise that it takes a community to polish a game. Thanks to Troels Ken Pedersen and George Locke for their advice, ideas, and support. Whitney "Strix" Beltrán and Sarah Lynne Bowman, as scholars of myth, helped us understand and render archetypes. Sara Williamson helped polish the script. We were greatly inspired by the characters in Jeppe and Maria Bergmann Hamming's *Sarabande*. Finally, we are incredibly grateful to the vast swath of people who helped develop and critique the game through play.

Sandcon 2014 Playstormers: Sarah Lynne Bowman, Tara Halwes, Shoshana Kessock, Graeme Smith, Sara Williamson.

Austin TX playtesters:

Facilitator-players: Sarah Lynne Bowman, Josh DeMott, Harrison Greene,

Players: Michelle Elbert, Bryan Evans, Ally Foxworthy, Sadie Hawkins, Jonathan Leistiko, Mallory McKenney, Desirée Ward.

Boston, MA playtesters:

Facilitator-players: Alessandro Canossa, George Locke, Lizzie Stark

Players: Benjamin Allen, Michelle Carter, Chip Cheek, Suvi Andrea Helminen, Katherine Hunt, Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich, Ashley Peterson.

## HOW TO USE THIS SCRIPT

This script is organized in a way we hope you'll find convenient.

- First we give you a little bit on our motivations for writing this game (p. 6).
- Second, we give you a brief overview of the game structure, so you can start getting it into your head (p. 8).
- Third, there is a detailed walkthrough that tells you how to facilitate each portion of the game experience (p. 11).
- Fourth, we give you an idea for adding some pervasive fun to *This Miracle* (p. 22).

Lastly, you can find the game materials (p. 23). You'll find three copies of our facilitator cheat sheet--a condensed version of the walkthrough--as we doubt you'll want to shuffle through this script while running the game (p. 24). You'll also find the character sheets there (p. 42). And lastly, the pervasive character materials, if you choose to use them. (p. 54).

## INTRODUCTION

This game began as something completely different. We were bandying around the idea of a two day larp about religion. We couldn't use a real-life religion, we were saying, because that had too much possibility to offend others. So clearly, we'd have to make one up. How would we do that? It would be cool if we could simulate the process of developing a religion, Nick said, with stories passed down, lost to history, and edited over time, sort of like a game of *Telephone*, where children pass whispers around the circle, and the phrase that comes out at the end is nothing like how it began. That sounds like a great idea for a freeform game, Lizzie said, and so we began work on *This Miracle*.

It quickly became clear that we both wanted to make a serious exploration of religion and its importance to humanity. We wanted to simulate how religions form over time, and how that process shapes the belief of faithful individuals. We also wanted to explore how religion can be a positive force in the lives of the faithful.

The tone of this game should be reverent and serious. If people at the bar afterward are having sarcastic conversations about how they felt nothing during this game, and have learned that religion and religious people are stupid, then we as creators--and you as a facilitator--have failed.

## The Role of the Facilitators

This scenario requires three facilitators who can collaborate with one another. You will participate in the game as the players do, but your core responsibility is to the game and the group, rather than simply to create good play yourself. During the first half of the game, each facilitator will control their own group of players. Facilitators will guide the creation of religious myths and ceremonies, and join in the fun as participants. During the second half of the game, you will team up to facilitate the larp and ceremonies together--you will play in the scenes along with the players and steer play with the suggestions you make.

In addition to participating, your other responsibilities are:

- Set the tone of the scenario and help all participants feel valued and included
- Help participants enter the sacred space of the game and the the sacred space of the ceremonies. Keep them in character, and try to keep the game a serious investigation of belief. Don't deliberately make the game unfunny or stiff, but keep the players from becoming too silly. We have given you some methods to help steer the game away from the ridiculous.
- Answer questions, keep track of time, and know the procedures of the game.
- Prepare the space, including the craft materials and the ceremonies when the time comes.

*The “As facilitators, you know best” clause*

In addition, we have an overall attitude toward the facilitation of *This Miracle*. Firstly, above all, we want players to have an interesting, thoughtful experience. In accordance with our American traditions of facilitation, this means that nothing is sacred--not even this script.

We've put a lot of time and effort into generating the procedures of the game and we'd prefer that you stick to them and play the game we designed. However, each group of players is unique and different locations have different play customs and attitudes--the world is big and we can't possibly plan for every contingency.

This is why we are lucky to have you and your co-facilitators in the room. If the game feels super-slow or is failing, we hereby empower you to make tweaks on the fly, even if they are not in the script. If the game is really tanking, we suggest ending it early and holding a discussion.

You are the facilitators for your run of the game--talk to each other, lean on each other, feel the tone of the room, and make the decisions that seem like they will produce the best experience for the players.

*The characters you will play*

The three facilitators should play the Sage, the Magician and the Explorer during the game. This allows you to be in a mentor role with respect to the other characters, which means

that you are easily able to give the players direction in character during both halves of the game.

We recommend that one of the facilitators play “the Guide” during the second act. Essentially, you'd be the leader of the pilgrims, shepherding them on this journey. Any of you can play the guide--maybe you are a religious teacher (the Sage), a religious leader (the Magician) or a literal tour guide, (the Explorer). Who does this is up to you. But one of you should commit to playing this part in the second act. In this role, you can easily move the characters to and from ceremonies in a way that fits the frame of the game.

## **A FAST OVERVIEW**

*This Miracle* is a game for 6-9 players and 3 facilitators. This section sketches an outline of the game experience to give you the big picture. We'll fill this in with more detail in the Walkthrough section.

### **Space/Prop Requirements**

You will need three rooms (four would be a little nicer, as you can make one room the space for all communal scenes), four to five hours, and a selection of art supplies--enough for each of your players to make one or two fast craft projects.

#### *Art supplies and nametags*

These don't need to be premium art supplies, but you should have a variety, so that players can choose a medium that speaks to them. We suggest pipe cleaners, paper and markers or pens, sculpting clay, paper plates or other stiff paper that can be cut into shapes, glue sticks or craft glue, and perhaps macaroni or beads or beans that could be glued into a shape if desired. Let your imagination run wild.

You'll also need as many pens as players. Some nametags--masking tape works in a pinch--are also useful.

#### *Space and character set-up*

Before the game begins, arrange an assortment of art supplies in each of the three rooms. You'll also want to staple the character sheets in half, to hide the second part of each sheet. We ask you to do this because we don't want to overwhelm the players with information. (See the next section)

During the ceremonies, it is also nice to have tea light candles, or fake tea lights to add interesting light and a different mood to the ceremony areas. These aren't strictly necessary but they add a lot of atmosphere to the scenario. You can also create atmosphere by dimming or turning off the lights.

(If you are running this at Fastaval, Lizzie and Nick will have a store of art supplies available for your use at the info desk. We can't bring scissors on the plane, though, so we ask each facilitator to bring a pair of scissors for players to use.)

You'll also need a full copy of this script printed.

### **Taking on an Archetype**

This game uses archetypes as characters. An archetype is difficult to describe--it's a collection of attributes from the collective unconscious of humanity. They are a type of role that a character occupies in a narrative. And archetypes have many different faces. For example, the Mother is a sort of general archetype, but in mythology she has many different faces--she could be the virgin mother, the bad mother, the loving mother, the jealous mother. Western mythology has many characters that take the role of The Fool, while in Native American and African mythology, for example, the fool takes the form of The Trickster.

In this game, we ask players to portray an archetype and later, a character that draws from that archetype. In the first act, they will portray a general archetype for example, the Mother. If they wish they may play a specific version of the mother--a bad mother, a loving mother, etc. During the first act, they will



represent the interests of that archetype as if they are god, ghost, or abstract concept. Essentially, we are asking them to wear a (metaphorical) mythic mask. In the second act, that archetype is turned into a character who has real life problems and dilemmas, and who is embarking on this pilgrimage to find peace, for example a mother named Sally who recently had a miscarriage and wants to understand why this happened to her. The character (Sally) is not the same as the archetype (Mother), but rather, draws attributes from it.

### **Game Structure**

#### *Workshop (30 minutes)*

You will introduce the players to each other, practice telling a round-robin story, hold a brief safety talk, and give them time to learn their archetype and answer any questions.

Then you will split the players into three groups, each helmed by a facilitator and go into three separate rooms, where you will hold a short opening meditation to get the players into their archetypes.

#### *Act 1-Building the Religion (~1.75 hours)*

You'll spend this act in these groups in separate rooms furnished with art supplies, building the religion. During this act, the players portray their archetypes.

Each group will work together to produce a founding religious myth, and then you will swap with one other group, and produce a short ceremony based on that other group's myth. The breakdown looks like this:

#### *Story Generation (40 minutes)*

- You'll create a story and retell it using several different methods. Players will create a physical artifact that relates to their story.

*The Handshake (5-10 minutes per group, but it will take a total of 30 minutes)*

- Your group gives its artifacts and stories to another group. There will be a little bit of downtime, and that's a good time for a bathroom break

#### *Ceremony Generation (~40 minutes)*

- Your group takes the story they have received, and makes a ceremony from it using our handout. The ceremony must be "prayable and playable." As in, it should be a devotion that real people might reasonably do, and it should take 5-10 minutes to play out, because we will be performing it in act 2.

#### *Act 2: The Pilgrimage (~1.5 hours)*

During Act 2, the three groups become one big group again. The players will portray pilgrims seeking solutions to their life problems through a holy pilgrimage. These pilgrim characters will draw attributes from the archetypes they portrayed in Act 1. The pilgrimage has three ceremony stops that correspond to the ceremonies created during Act 1.

The act starts with character creation--players open up the second half of their character sheet. The second half of the sheet contains instructions for developing a particular pilgrim

related to their archetype. Players will fill in the bottom half of the character sheet--it will help them create a dilemma for their character. This dilemma is why their character has come on the pilgrimage--to ask the divine for guidance.

You will explain the next phase of the game. Rather than the structured story-building of the first act, these scenes are played larp-style, with all participants interacting with one another continuously from the beginning of the scene to the end. The Guide will be responsible for telling the pilgrims when it's time to move to the ritual, or for guiding them out of the ritual and back into the hotel space. Here are the scenes in act 2:

- **Introductory Scene** (5 minutes) gets us into our new characters.
- **The night before the pilgrimage's first stop** (15 minutes). The journeying party forms up and gets to know one another.
- **The first ceremony** (10 minutes). Play out the Origins ceremony created during act 1.
- **Post-first ceremony, the night before the second ceremony** (10 minutes)
- **The second ceremony** (10 minutes). Play out the Revelations ceremony created during act 1.
- **Post-second ceremony, the night before the third ceremony** (10 minutes).
- **The third ceremony** (10 minutes). Play out the Ethics ceremony created during act 1.
- **Ending scene** (5 minutes). You can play a scene back at the hotel, where characters say goodbye to one another

- **Coda** (2 minutes). Players close their eyes and meditate on their experience, to say goodbye to their characters.

*Debrief* (~30 minutes): let the participants talk about their experience, and keep things going afterward if you are able.

## DETAILED WALKTHROUGH

Now that you have the general shape of the game in your mind, let's go through this in a little more detail.

### Game Prep

- Meet with your co-facilitators, and decide who is going to play what.
- Decide who will say what during the workshop
- The stories and ceremonies in Act 1 have specific themes. Assign each theme to a particular facilitator.
- Assemble the craft supplies--put them in the relevant rooms. If you're using the candles, have them handy as well.
- Fold and staple the character sheets so that only the archetypes are visible.
- You'll also need as many pens as players.
- Make sure each facilitator has a copy of the Mythic Item sheet, the ceremony sheet, and the two facilitator cheat sheets.
- Make sure each facilitator has a timer.

### The Workshop (~30)

With three facilitators, we recommend splitting up the workshop duties so that each person has a chance to do a little bit of the talking. This helps establish to the group that you are a team.

If people are milling around before the game starts (like if you're waiting for the stragglers to show up), you can make the

stapled character sheets available to them to peek at. This can help speed casting later on, but is not necessary if you don't have time.

### *Niceties (5 minutes)*

Greet the players and introduce yourselves as facilitators. Go around in a circle and ask everyone to say their name and their favorite character from mythology, and a brief (couple word) description of who that is.

Example: I'm Lizzie and my favorite mythological character is the Greek Goddess Gaia because she imagined herself into existence.

Teach them how to get quiet. When a facilitator raises their hand, everyone else also raises a hand and gets quiet.

### *Explain the timeline (5 minutes)*

Tell the players that we are going to have a brief warm-up together, and that the scenario has two parts. In the first part of the scenario, we'll be dividing into three groups to come up with some mythological stories and ceremonies using some storytelling games. You'll get to mess around with some craft stuff and be creative. That will take about 90 minutes. During the second act, everyone will come back together and we'll all become pilgrims going on a holy journey to find the answer to a deep personal question we've got, and we'll perform the ceremonies we created during act one. This means that the ceremonies need to be playable and prayable. That will take another 90 minutes. Afterward, we'll hold a short debrief.

### *Practice Telling a Round-Robin Story (5 minutes)*

The first act of this scenario involves working together to build a common narrative. This means accepting what your co-players say and building on it. If I say it's raining and you say "it's not" then it's hard to know where to go next in the scene. If I say it's raining and you say, "reminds me of the day my mother died..." well, now we're getting somewhere.

We're going to practice this one in a big group. Ask the players to stand or sit in a circle. The first person will begin by saying a sentence or two about their day, and the person to their left will continue the story for a few sentences. Each player after the first should, if possible, begin their continuation with the words "Yes" or "Yes and..." Tell the players that they don't have to be brilliant, just that they have to keep the story going.

Let the story go around the full circle at least once. If players are having trouble building on each other's narratives, you might wish to keep going for a little while until everyone gets the hang of it.

Example:

First player: "This morning I woke up and had sausage for breakfast"

Second player: "Yes, and it was very spicy. I really like spicy sausage because it reminds me of my mother."

Third player: "Yes, my mother always used to cook sausage on Easter..."

### *Casting (12 minutes)*

Explain that in this game, we'll be playing archetypes. Archetypes are a collection of common attributes used in myth. During act one, you'll be playing your archetype like an abstract concept--like a god, ghost or personification of the abstract things your archetype represents. During Act 1, you'll have some flexibility in how you play your character. So if you are The Mother, you'll be the idea of motherhood, and you can choose to switch between good mother, bad, mother, etc. or pick one of them as it suits you. The character sheets are stapled--mainly just to help you focus on what is most relevant right now in the game. During the second act, you'll open up the bottom of your character sheet, fill a few things in, and play a specific character that draws from the archetype you'll be playing right now.

Tell players you are going to read through the list of archetypes twice (remove the characters that the facilitators are playing). The first time, the players should listen to what is available and think about what archetypes they feel connected to, or are interested in playing. The second time you read through the list, you'll give out character sheets. Simply read the name of the archetype, ask "who wants to play it?" and if no one does, move on. If two people want to play the same character, ask them to decide who gets it among themselves.

Give the players a chance to read their archetypes and make a decision about what version of each archetype they want to play. At the end of character assignment, ask if anyone is unhappy with their character, and if someone is discontented, see whether another player is willing to switch.

### *Safety Talk (3 minutes)*

In this scenario, the door is always open. This means that you can leave at any time or for any reason and it won't break the game. If you decide to leave and won't come back, please do let a facilitator know so that we aren't waiting for you, and if possible, seek one of us out later so that we can be sure that you are OK. There will be a couple of natural breaks in the middle of Act 1 to go to the bathroom, get water, etc.

We also trust that you are all responsible people aware of your personal limits. If something happens during the game that makes you uncomfortable in a bad way, we invite you to speak up about it. If needed, you can stop all play around you with the phrase "stop the game." Then we'll try to talk about what went wrong and how to fix it, or whether we can fix it.

If stuff is feeling intense in a bad way, we invite you to step outside of the play area and take a breather. Or of course, you can always come to any of the facilitators if you are in trouble or need to talk.

Note: Sometimes, as a facilitator, it can be hard to let players leave the game. But remember that a successful safety technique is one that gets used. If someone leaves a game they aren't suited for, that is success!

### *Tone and setting (2 minutes)*

The tone of this game is serious and reverent. Part of the inspiration for the format of the first act is to mimic the creation of religious texts and artifacts. If you think about the Bible, for example, the narratives within went through many iterations,

passed from one group to another, translated to and from different languages, and selectively edited by religious committees to make the book we know as the Bible today.

The setting of this game is in no particular place or time. Something like early-modern to modern society with not entirely unfamiliar family and economic patterns. Although the stories of the first act will end in miracles, we don't want overt fantastical type stuff. The setting is realist, inasmuch as it's possible to have a realist game about miracles that exists out of place and time.

### *Break the players into three groups (2 minutes)*

Move the players into three groups, each helmed by a facilitator. The composition of these three groups can be arbitrary among the roles, but if possible, avoid putting directly opposite archetypes (e.g. the Warrior and the Healer) in the same group. Take each group to a separate room. Explain that you are going to do a storytelling exercise like the round-robin example earlier to build the religion the game will center on.

### *Guided Meditation (5 minutes)*

Tell the players that the game begins with a guided meditation to help get them into character. After the guided meditation is over, you'd really like them to stay in their archetype, and not to speak or roleplay with one another outside of the interactions guided by the facilitator. In general, we'll assume that whatever someone says comes from their archetype. Then dim the lights, ask the players to find a comfortable spot and posture, and tell them they can close their eyes if they like. Read guided meditation #1.

you--and the players--to interpret these differences into a harmonious whole during Act 2.

### **ACT 1: Building the Religion**

During this act, each of the three groups will create one story around a specific theme, and then a ceremony based on a different story and theme.

By the end of the act you should have a story and a ceremony around each of the following topics, summarized on one of the facilitator reference sheets:

- **Origins:** “How were things created? What is the relationship between the divine and the world in which we live?”
- **Revelation:** “How does the divine speak to humanity? What is the divine’s relationship to humankind?”
- **Ethics:** “What is the meaning of human life? What is the purpose of existence? What sort of rules do humans need to follow in order to be in line with the divine?”

Decide in advance which facilitator will work with which theme first.

N.B. It is possible that some of the stories produced will contradict one another on some level. Maybe the accounts of the prophets or the values of the society differ exceedingly. We do not see this as a problem. After all, many religious texts contain passages that contradict one another on their face. It will be up to

### ***Building the Story*** (30-40 minutes total)

In your separate room, you will explain to your group of players that you are about to begin a short scene at the start of the pilgrimage. In this scene, we are going to create a myth together using some different modes of telling. We will tell and retell this story to ourselves, and over time it will acquire different layers of meaning. We are going to work together as a group.

Tell the players that the first thing you’ll do is tell a round-robin story together around a particular theme. Introduce the theme (Origins, Revelation, Ethics) to your group, and if it feels right, ask players to name some mythic stories that fit with these themes.

#### *Round Robin* (~15 minutes)

Put the sheet of Mythic Items on the table. This sheet is meant to provide inspiration and some common vocabulary of the stuff of myth. Ideally, each person at the table should try to introduce one of these mythic elements into the story. The story must culminate in a divine miracle.

Begin the scene with a simple setting. Tell them that a small group of pilgrims have gathered around a fire the night before the pilgrimage to tell one of the core stories of the faith. The players will be wearing their

archetypal masks from the meditation. Have them sit in a circle.

Here are some suggestions for places to start each of the stories--you can choose one or come up with your own. These are also listed on one of the facilitator sheets:

- **Origins:** after the disaster that ended the first age, the discovery of home, the formation of humankind
- **Revelation:** the birth of the prophet, exodus from the old home, the first prophecy
- **Ethics:** the giving of laws, the formation of the covenant, the model of the prophet, the last speech before apotheosis

Ask one player to start the story off--play passes to the left, with each player saying a couple sentences. Be patient. Let the story unfurl until it seems to have come to an end.

Tell them that we will go back over the story we just told--we are going to edit it down as a group. Each player will say only one sentence and we will go around the circle twice. If your story had many episodes, you might wish to focus on one of them during this second round-robin. Alternately, each player will tell one sentence of the previous round-robin story--the sentence they would like to be recorded. What they have created at the end of this second story cycle is the myth that moves on to the next step.

N.B.: The purpose of this second round is to edit the story to something tighter and tonally consistent. If you find that the story has gotten too crazy or silly, use the second story cycle as an opportunity to nudge them to back towards the tone. A simple reminder of the tone should be enough to get things back on track.

#### *The Artifacts* (~10 minutes)

Now it's time get crafty. Tell the characters that you have a variety of craft materials available. They should choose something that speaks to them and make an artifact or two that relates to the story and communicates its meaning. It could be a sculpture, a drawing, a mask, an etching, or an object for use.

While the characters are working on their objects, rather than conversation, tell the story again to one another in a round-robin fashion. Ask the characters to make their sentences relatively short.

When the artifacts are done, present them to each other using a brief description of no more than 15 words. Ask each person to write that description on a piece of paper, and then proceed to the handshake.

#### ***The Handshake*** (5 minutes for each individual exchange, but will take longer for all the groups to switch)

Explain the handshake to the players. During the handshake they will hand their artifacts and story off to the group in a ritualized fashion, and they will receive artifacts and stories

from another group in return. They will create a ceremony based on the new artifacts and story they have received.

There may be a little downtime while waiting for another group to be ready to receive or give a story--this is OK--you can use that time to take a bathroom or water break.

Once your group receives a story, go right into the next exercise.

Here's what swaps to make:

**Origins** gives their story to **Revelations**  
**Revelations** gives their story to **Ethics**  
**Ethics** gives their story to **Origins**

Here's what a swap looks like, using Origins, giving their story to Revelations as examples:

- The Revelations and Origins facilitators explain the handshake to players.
- Origins files into the room that Revelations has been using. Each person has their artifact in hand.
- The facilitator for Origins gives an extremely short summary of the myth to Revelations. e.g. "Some hunters went searching for game in the forest. The archer heard something in the bushes and shot. It was a bear. Before the hunting party, the bear's stomach opened. The blood that dropped onto the ground became the seven crops. When they gutted the bear's stomach they found a human baby."
- One by one, each of the Origins players offers their artifact to one of the Revelations players, and

proclaims their short sentence while looking the Revelations player in the eye. The Revelations players receive it delicately and nod.

- The Origins players file back into their room to await a visit from the Ethics players, and the Revelations players may now begin to interpret the artifact.

### **The ceremonies** (~30 minutes)

Once your group has received another group's story and an accompanying set of artifacts, it will create a ceremony based around what it has just received. You have given your story and theme away, so now you have a new one. In other words, if you just received the Ethics story, your group's theme is now Ethics and you will build the Ethics ceremony. Each ceremony will be structured with some guidelines, and produced according to the following procedure:

#### *What you have received* (7 minutes)

Start by asking your group to interpret the objects and narrative given to them. What can we infer about this culture? How do we think the objects fit together? Which ones convey the most important information? What does this culture--which is now the group's culture--value?

#### *Present the Format* (5 minutes)

Tell the group that it will be making a ceremony out of the story it has received, and that there are some guidelines. Firstly, the group has the artifacts and accompanying story. Then present the ceremony Elements sheet, which contains some questions



specific to each ritual, as well as some structural requirements. For example, the Origins ceremony must include an offering of the problem up to the Divine.

The ritual needs to be “prayable and playable,” that is, it should be sincere and make sense as a devotional activity, and it should be playable within about five minutes. Remind the players that during act two, we will play out this ritual with the objects and resources available to us.

#### *Make the ceremony (15 minutes)*

The group should now collaborate to make a brief ceremony to be used in the pilgrimage that communicates something about the story they have received. Try to make sure everyone is included, but if you’ve got a way introverted group, you may have to take control by asking leading questions (Does this ceremony have an officiant?) in order to push people to make a decision.

Take special care to observe the ceremony, because you will be responsible for telling your co-facilitators what is supposed to happen.

When the ceremonies are complete--and it’s probably a good idea to try them out once or twice--give the players a break. Act One is over and Act Two is about to start.

During this break, consult with your co-GMs to quickly share information about the other myths and ceremonies to establish some shared info on what this religion is about.

## **ACT 2: The Pilgrimage (~1.75 hours)**

You spent most of Act 1 in your three groups. In Act 2, it is time to reunite them into one, unified whole. Act 2 takes place in two different rooms. One room will represent the hotel(s) that the characters stay at during their pilgrimage. The other room will double as the sacred ceremonial spaces. During each ceremonial section of this act, we encourage you to decorate the space with the relevant player-created artifacts from Act 1.

### *Getting into Act 2: A Mini-Workshop*

Chances are good that the three groups will finish at different times. If your group finishes first, you may choose to get them started on character creation for Act 2. Denote one room as the central room where you will gather at the beginning of Act 2.

Whether you do the explanation or character creation first isn’t important. What’s important is that the game masters have their chance to talk to one another before the explanations. And whatever you do first, at the beginning of this act, remind players that during the second half of the scenario, they will play pilgrims going on a holy journey. The stations on the journey will be the ceremonies created in act one.

### *Character Creation (10 minutes)*

Distribute pens, and ask the players to open up the lower half of their character sheets. They should give their pilgrim a name. Their pilgrim is dealing with a personal problem on this journey, their “issue”.

This issue has three parts:

- **Topic.** This is the area of their life affected. They can choose between a business, family or social issue.
- **Crisis.** This describes the nature of the self-conflict they are having. Either they are having doubt, experiencing a betrayal, or have undergone a loss.
- **Risk.** This is what is at stake in their crisis. They can choose between status, well-being, and identity.

All of these headings and issues are printed on each character sheet. Ask them to circle the options that appeal to them, and to write a single sentence on the character sheet describing the problems. Each character sheet has a few additional question prompts.

Give the players a couple minutes to figure this out, and to make nametags that includes their characters’ names and archetypes.

### *Explanations (5 minutes)*

The facilitators should summarize the religious tenets established in act one for the players. It works nicely for one facilitator to take Origins, one to take

Revelations, and one to take Ethics. It would be quite interesting for each facilitator to take the theme that they did not touch during Act 1.

Then explain the structure of Act 2, namely that along this journey there will be three ceremony stops. We will play an intro scene. Then we will play a scene leading up to first ritual, which is the Origins ritual. We will play the Origins ritual, and then a scene after that ritual and before the Revelations ritual, etc. We will close with a short reaction scene, and then a two minute silent meditation.

Along the journey, the characters will present their problem to the divine, listen for the divine’s response to the problem, and commit to the divine that they are making their decision.

### *Meditation (2 minutes)*

Read the second meditation to get the players into character when they open their eyes they will be in the opening scene. Give them a few moments of silence at the end of the meditation, then announce the setting of the next scene.

### *Intro Scene (5 minutes)*

Tell them that the transportation the pilgrims have taken to arrive at the inn has gotten in late, and the other pilgrims are already gone. It’s not clear where to go next, but they should not be here.

The idea is that a small crisis should encourage the players to start talking a bit to solve the problem. It is also here to help them figure out who their character is and to start to form relationships with other characters.

Once they have started talking, a facilitator should come up as the guide, apologizing for losing them and directing them to their rooms. The Guide should ask who each person is and where they are from, and then disappear for a few minutes to sort out their rooms, giving them one more chance to talk.

After the intro scene, one facilitator plays the tour guide leading this group from place to place and the other two play members of the temple staff. You will follow this format:

- Preparing for Ceremony (10 minutes)
- Origins Ceremony (5-10 minutes)
- Preparing for Ceremony (10 minutes)
- Revelations Ceremony (5-10 minutes)
- Preparing for Ceremony (10 minutes)
- Ethics Ceremony (5-10 minutes)
- Aftermath: the pilgrims say goodbye (5 minutes)
- Coda: 2 minutes of silent meditation (2 minutes)

*Scene: Preparing for Ceremony (10 minutes)*

The facilitator playing the tour guide tells the players that the first step in the ceremony is to look to each other for the source of the Divine and a chance to reflect on the issue. The framing here is that the Divine has made these encounters happen so that players

can meditate on their issues. Their interlocutors have been sent to be instructive.

The tour guide should ask the groups to divide into threes. This should be random among the roles. Characters then have the opportunity to talk to each other. One facilitator might prepare the ceremony space during this time. The other facilitators can use their roles as mentors or guides to introduce, in character, what will happen in the following scene.

The facilitators should give a seed to the conversation to spark it as the players enter the inn.

For example: The return trip was gruelingly hot, there were strange pilgrims from another land who entered the hotel before you, the stars were especially bright and clear tonight.

During the first preparation scene, you will only be preparing for the Origins ceremony. Since the other two scenes occur between the other stops on the pilgrimage, the characters will probably want to both reflect on the ceremony that has just happened as well as prepare for the next.

The hotel scene time is important to framing the rest of the experience. Due to time constraints, we've shortened it to fit a 4 hour slot, but if you have more time, these scenes can be expanded a bit to permit more player interaction.

*Scene: The ceremony (5-10 minutes)*

The ceremony should take place in a different room, and a selection of the artifacts from act one should be present in that room. In order to differentiate the ceremonies, you might wish to have different objects present during each ritual, and you might wish to arrange the furniture differently, depending on what sort of religion you have created. (i.e. are all holy spaces the same? Or are they all unique?)

In the guise of the tour guide, the facilitators can remind players that this next ritual might be done differently in their home temple, so here is how it is done at this temple.

The ceremony is done with appropriate sounds, text, and action as established in Act 1.

To remind you of the themes of each ritual:

- Origins ceremony: offering the problem to the Divine by placing something on the altar.
- Revelations ceremony: Asking the Divine for guidance, and receiving a sign.
- Ethics ceremony: Inscribing a symbol to mark dedication to their final decision.

N.B.: If a player refuses to adhere to the ceremony by violating the ceremony rules or disrupting the others, the facilitator in a role of a religious authority should remind them one time sternly that this is a holy rite and that disrupting the

religious experience of others is blasphemy. If the players continues to be disruptive, the player is removed for the ceremony quietly, and led to a different room to commune with the divine in meditation to see why the ceremony was impossible to do. The player should be left out of the scene, and returned at night. The warning should never be given to the same player twice; if the player acts up again, s/he should just be removed immediately.

The Rebel character has some special instructions on their character sheet. Basically, we want them to be able to Rebel, if they so choose without breaking the game. We've asked them to make their rebellion metaphorical and personally meaningful, rather than disruptive to the experience of other players. They may leave the game space if they need to.

Once the ceremony is finished, the facilitators declare it finished and the characters are free to leave.

After the last ceremony, the players are given 5 extra minutes to retire when the ritual is finished, to say goodbye to each other and finish any conversations.

*Coda (2 minutes)*

Ask players to close their eyes and meditate for a moment on their experience. When they open they will be back in their own skins.

**Debrief (20 minutes)**

The purpose of the debrief is to get the players started on processing their experience. Ask them to gather in a circle, and to say goodbye to their characters by removing their name

tags. Ask them, during the ensuing discussion, to try to talk about their characters not as “I,” but rather as they would a friend. “Bob did this, Bob did that...”

Players should answer the next questions in pairs. Ask them to find a partner, tell them to discuss the question, and then have them find a new partner before moving on to the next question:

- What most struck you about this experience? (3 minutes)
- What was one cool thing that someone else made possible? (3 minutes)
- What was the hardest thing about this experience? (3 minutes)
- What will you take away from this experience? (3 minutes)

Then gather everyone into one large group for ten minutes or so of open discussion. Be sensitive to group dynamics. Don't let the loud-talkers dominate the debrief--ask questions of the quieter ones, but if they don't want to speak up, don't push them. If needed you can prod them with a few questions similar to these:

- How do you relate this game to your own experience of religion?
- Did this change or expand your view of religion in any way?
- Did anyone undergo any personal transformations they'd like to share?

Ask players to help you collect the artistic objects and other props, and if your venue is suitable ask permission to display

them in a common area (see the pervasive expansion instructions below).

Tell them you'll be available afterwards if they want to hang out and chat, encourage them to keep talking to one another, and thank them for the game.

### **THE PERVASIVE *THIS MIRACLE* EXPANSION**

If the occasion for the game permits, and you are at a convention, you can add a pervasive element to *This Miracle*. After the game, collect the artifacts that players have created, along with the slips of explanatory paper and display them somewhere. If you want to be fancy you can write bare-bones versions of the myths on a sheet of paper as well. Post up the “Be anthropologists!” sign nearby. It invites viewers to (singly, or in groups of three) to pretend to be a tenured professor, an associate prof seeking tenure, or an adjunct, and to discuss the objects in the case.

# GAME MATERIALS

## Pre-Game Checklist

- Meet with your co-facilitators, and decide who is going to play what.
- Decide who will say what during the workshop
- The stories and ceremonies in Act 1 have specific themes. Assign each theme to a particular facilitator.
- Assemble the craft supplies--put them in the relevant rooms, if you're able, and staple the character sheets. If you're using the candles, have them handy as well.
- You'll also need as many pens as players, and some nametags.
- Make sure each facilitator has a copy of the Mythic Item sheet, the ceremony sheet, and the GM cheat sheet.
- Make sure each facilitator has a timer.

## Supply List

- pens for each player
- nametags or masking tape
- 3 sets of craft supplies that include:
  - something to sculpt with
  - something to draw with and on
  - something to cut with and on
  - glue and tape
  - assorted other materials as you find suitable
- (votive candles or a substitute for ceremonies)
- a complete copy of this game script, separated from the game materials, and stapled down the side
- a stapler

# FACILITATOR MASTER CHEAT SHEET

## Workshop

*Niceties* (5 minutes). Introduce yourselves. Do a round of names and favorite figures from myth. Teach them how to get quiet.

*Explain the timeline* (5 minutes) Two acts. First act is storytelling, the second act is pilgrimage. Give a brief sense of the structure of each act.

*Tell a round-robin story* (5 minutes)

*Casting* (7 minutes) Explain archetypes. Read through the list of characters twice, and assign roles.

*Safety talk* (3 minutes). The door is open. We trust you to know your limits. "Stop the game" is the cut-phrase. When in doubt, come see a facilitator. We care about your well-being.

*Tone and setting* (2 minutes). This game is serious and reverent. You can think about the religious creation in terms of how the Bible was edited into its present form. We're in an early-modern to modern society. No particular place and time, but realistic to the extent possible with the material.

*Groups and Meditation* (5 minutes) Choose groups. Try not to let opposite archetypes be in the same group. Go to your separate rooms with your separate groups. Dim lights, and read meditation #1.

## Act I: Building the Religion

*Story: Round Robin* (10 minutes) We're archetypes gathered around a fire. Present sheet of Mythic items. Each person should try to include one or more elements from that sheet. Present theme of story. Each story must culminate in a miracle. Refer to the ceremony cheat sheet for themes and questions. Do one last story cycle--twice around the circle with each participant saying one sentence--to edit the story down to something tighter and more tonally appropriate. If necessary, focus on one episode.

*Story: The Artifacts* (10 minutes) Retell the story to one another in short sentences while doing crafts. Write down no more than 15 words about what your artifact is.

*The Handshake* (5 mins) Explain the Handshake ceremony. Origins-->Revelations-->Ethics-->Origins

*Ceremony: What you have received* (7 minutes) Interpret the objects and narrative. What can we infer about this culture? How do the objects fit together? Which ones convey the most important information? What does this culture value?

*Ceremony: Present the Format* (5 minutes) Present ceremony elements sheet. They have artifacts and story to work with. It's gotta be prayable and playable.



*Making the ceremony* (15 minutes) Collaborate with the group. Help move them along if needed.

## **Act 2: The Pilgrimage**

Meet with co-facilitators during the break to exchange info about the religion. Gather players for character creation.

*Character Creation* (10 minutes) Players open up the lower half of their character sheets circle elements for the issue, and write a sentence about their characters. Make name tags.

*Explanations* (5 minutes) Summarize religious tenets for players. Explain structure of Act 2.

*Meditation* (2 minutes). Lower lights, have players close eyes, read meditation 2.

*Intro scene* (5 minutes). The pilgrims have arrived at the inn late.

*Preparing for Ceremony* (10 minutes). Tour guide asks players to divide into threes at random. The divine is putting you together to talk. Facilitators give a conversation seed, e.g. return trip was gruelingly hot, there were strange pilgrims from another land who entered the hotel before you, stars were especially bright. Other facilitator sets up ceremony space.

*Origins Ceremony* (5-10 Minutes)

*Preparing for Ceremony* (10 minutes) Repeat as before.

*Revelations Ceremony* (5-10 minutes)

*Preparing for Ceremony* (10 minutes) Repeat as before.

*Ethics Ceremony* (5-10 minutes)

*Departures* (5 minutes) The characters say goodbye.

*Coda* (2 minutes) Players meditate on own experience. When they open their eyes, they'll be back in their own skins.

**Debrief** (20 minutes). Say goodbye to characters by removing name tags. Talk about your character in the third person.

Players get into pairs:

- What most struck you about this experience? (3 minutes)
- What was one cool thing that someone else made possible? (3 minutes)
- What was the hardest thing about this experience? (3 minutes)
- What will you take away from this experience? (3 minutes)

Open discussion (10 minutes) Suggested questions if they aren't bursting to talk:

- How do you relate this game to your own experience of religion?
- Did this change or expand your view of religion in any way?
- Did anyone undergo any personal transformations they'd like to share?

Ask if you can display objects, clean up, and continue the debrief informally as you do so.

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## FACILITATOR SUMMARY OF CEREMONIES AND MYTHS

	<b>Origins</b>	<b>Revelation</b>	<b>Ethics</b>
<b>Theme</b>	“How were things created? What is the relationship between the divine and the world in which we live?”	“How does the divine speak to humanity? What is the divine’s relationship to humankind?”	“What is the meaning of human life? What is the purpose of existence? What sort of rules do humans need to follow in order to be in line with the divine?”
<b>Suggestions for places to start Round-Robin</b>	after the disaster that ended the first age, the discovery of home, the formation of humankind	the birth of the prophet, exodus from the old home, the first prophecy	the giving of laws, the formation of the covenant, the model of the prophet, the last speech before apotheosis
<b>Ritual Requirements</b>	The players put an object on the altar, offering the problem to the Divine	The players ask the Divine for guidance, and the Divine gives them each a sign.	The players inscribe a symbol that marks their dedication to their final decision.

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## MYTHIC INFO SHEET

**Birth or Death**

**Sky**

**Water**

**Wind**

**Earth**

**Ice**

**Crops:** yams, gourds, rice, wheat, corn, fruit, apples, pomegranates etc.

**Death**

**Fertility**

**Song**

**Eggs**

**Oceans**

**Darkness**

**Moon**

**Sun**

**Comet**

**Light**

**Metal**

**Fire**

**Wine**

**Washing**

**Clean vs Spoiled**

**Silk or Gold**

**Sacrifice** of flesh or blood

**Divination**--sticks, reading birds in the sky, dice, cards, animal guts, fire-cracked turtle shells

**Dream visions**

**Animals:** coyote, bear, deer, fish, raven, fox, wolf, spider, snake

**Numbers:** especially the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or after that, odd numbers, prime numbers, or perfect squares

You may wish to have things happen in threes.

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**Oceans**

**Darkness**

**Moon**

**Sun**

**Comet**

**Light**

**Metal**

**Fire**

**Wine**

**Washing**

**Clean vs Spoiled**

**Silk or Gold**

**Sacrifice** of flesh or blood

**Divination**--sticks, reading birds in the sky, dice, cards, animal guts, fire-cracked turtle shells

**Dream visions**

**Animals:** coyote, bear, deer, fish, raven, fox, wolf, spider, snake

**Numbers:** especially the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or after that, odd numbers, prime numbers, or perfect squares

You may wish to have things happen in threes.

## CEREMONY ELEMENTS

Consider the question appropriate to your group, and write down your answer. If you have the...

- Origin objects: “How does one thank the divine for the gift or curse of existence?”
- Revelation objects: “How does the divine show itself and speak to humanity?”
- Ethics objects: “What rules do humans need to follow in order to align with the divine?”

Your ceremony should incorporate your group’s answer to these questions, as well as the Origins, Revelation, or Ethics story.

Your ceremony must include a particular element:

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Elements typical of ceremonies, and questions to ask:

- **Officiant**: Does this ceremony have an officiant, or does it relate to one of the objects?
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**Guided Meditation #1** (Read slowly, with pauses, to give players time to think)

You can close your eyes if you like. Take a moment and breathe. Listen to your breathing. Breathe in...and out. In... Out... As you breathe, take stock of your body and how you are feeling right now. Perhaps you feel tense or nervous or calm, or tired. Any feeling at all is OK. Relax. Relax your feet, your legs, your hips, your back, your arms your neck, and your head.

You are standing on a beach. You can feel the soft sand on your bare feet and hear the waves lapping gently against the shore. The water is calm, deep blue, and inviting. Step into it. The water feels warm against your feet. Step in up to your shins then to your knees, then to your hips. In front of you, an object is floating. It is the mask of the archetype you are about to assume. Pick up the mask. Perhaps it is metal or wood, paper, or plaster or cloth. Feel its weight. Take a moment to examine it. Perhaps its expression is fierce, or curious, or aroused. Examine the arch of its eyebrows, the set of its mouth. Consider the colors of the mask. Perhaps they are gaudy or somber, primal or refined. You have moved into the water up to your chest.

The gentle waves make your whole body sway now, towards and away from your firmly planted feet. The mask is still in your hand. When you are ready, press your face into the mask. It feels oddly like clay, moulding to your face's features of its own accord. You are deeper into the water now, and a large, but gentle wave washes over your head, and you are born anew. You will now channel the thoughts, feelings, and agendas of your chosen archetype until we take our masks off again. Open your eyes when you are ready, and we will gather around a fire on the beach to tell stories.

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You can close your eyes if you want. You are sitting in front of a fire on the beach with your mask on. You have told the old stories together, spoken the words of your ancestors and remembered their rituals. This was right and proper. But now it is time to undertake your holy pilgrimage. Use one hand to slowly peel the thick mask off your face. Your head immediately feels lighter. And now, when you look at the mask you can see its features imprinted on to you. You recognize your nose in its nose, your attitude in the set of its mouth, your pride in its cheekbones. You are no longer the archetype, but you are *of* the archetype.

It is night time now, and the waves still lap gently at the shore. You have come here to start a pilgrimage, to seek divine guidance for your worldly problems. You have left home behind to come on this pilgrimage. Perhaps you have left your family. Perhaps you have left friends. Perhaps you have left a business, a partner, a child, or a moral vocation. However you feel about leaving, consider it and turn the emotion over in your hands.

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## The Jester/Fool

“Sha la la la la la, live for today.”

### As an archetype...

The Jester or fool seeks to live in the moment and enjoy it fully. Jesters interact with the world by keeping the mood light with jokes and capers. But some jokes can cut as surely as swords, and cynicism can overtake a Fool as well as the targets of their jibes. At their best, the Jester represents the joy and freedom of humanity, the ability of humans to live for this moment. At their worst, Jesters wallow in these joys too much, and can't see the big picture or move forward with their lives.

Different aspects: You could be the Scoundrel, the Trickster, the Idiot, the Innocent, the Clown, or the Critic.

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### As a pilgrim...

You're on this journey because you lost your joie de vivre after witnessing something horrible. You are on this journey to make sense of what happened and figure out how to approach the world again. You might have a vestige of your humor, or you might have turned bitter, but you have some spark of hope that the right answer.

How responsible were you for the horrible event? How connected were you to it?  
What did you do immediately after the event happened? Were you strong? Were you kind?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the funniest moment of your life:*

## The Caregiver

“Community before self.”

### As an archetype...

The Caregiver always seeks to help others with generosity and tenderness, and fears being selfish. They represent the altruistic impulses of humanity. They build community and nurture others, but at its extremes this can come at a price. Caregivers can end up enabling others or allowing themselves to become martyrs or encouraging others to become co dependent on them.

Different Aspects: You could be the Jealous Mother, the Martyr, the Protector, the Elder, the Healer, or the Listener.

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### As a pilgrim...

You decided to come on this journey because your child is gone, and now you are questioning how the higher powers could have made that happen. This journey will be part of dealing with your grief, and you hope you will find some peace.

How did you express your love to the child? How did you show your commitment?  
What actually caused your child's absence? What secret do you know about what happened that you haven't shared?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the moment when you felt most connected to your child:*

## The Lover

“Love conquers all.”

### As an archetype...

The lover seeks bliss, and finds it in giving focus to and receiving it from their lover(s). They are about passion, commitment, enthusiasm and sensual, bodily pleasure. They seek to make themselves more attractive to themselves and others. Of course, love is not a bed of roses. It comes with a fear of being alone, unloved, or unwanted. And there is always the risk of being too much of a people-pleaser and losing one's own identity, sexual addiction, and problems within one's relationships.

Different Aspects: You could be the Faithful Partner, the Romantic, the Prostitute, the Unwanted, the Crowd-Pleaser, or the Hedonist.

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### As a pilgrim...

Your lover dumped you for reasons that don't make sense to you, and it has caused a crisis of faith in yourself and in the higher power. Can love survive in this flawed world?

What reason did your lover give you when the relationship ended?

What is the thing you miss most about having your lover in your life?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the most romantic moment of your life:*

## The Rebel/Destroyer

“Rules were made to be broken.”

### As an archetype...

The Rebel brings change and transformation--sometimes you have to weed the lawn in order to let the grass grow, to make room for what comes next. The Rebel represents the human death drive as well as the fear of annihilation. They seek to tear down established structures that no longer serve life. They have the ability to let it go, be humble, and embrace the capacity of themselves and others to change. On the flip side, sometimes they destroy things just for the sake of that destruction, and can end up with anger that is out of control, or embroiled in self-destructive behavior.

Different Aspects: You could be the Righteous One, the Misanthrope, the Revolutionary, the Weirdo, the Wild One, the Voice of the Opposition, or the Rabble-Rouser.

*Play note: The challenge of this role is to find a way to manifest rebellion without destroying the experiences of other players, particularly during the ceremonies in Act 2. You can, of course, elect not to participate in certain parts of the ceremony, if it feels right for your character, but knocking over the ritual items, for example, would screw things up for others. So use good judgment, and if you need to rebel by leaving the play space, feel free to do so.*

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### As a pilgrim...

You are here because recently you had a transformative religious experience that has set you on the path to believer-hood. You wonder whether there is a place for you in this holy order, and whether you will accept the religious authority that comes from above.

What happened to shake your deep skepticism and force you to question your doubt?  
What did you think of the pilgrimage before you personally decided to go on it?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the most trouble you have ever gotten into on purpose:*

## The Sage

"The truth shall set you free."

### As an archetype...

The Sage seeks truth and enlightenment above all else, and fears being ignorant or believing in the wrong thing. The Sage represents humanity's search for objective truth, for wisdom and knowledge, and for honest skepticism. At their best, they use a process to search for enlightenment. At their worst, they focus on details so hard that they can't see or act in accordance with the big picture. Sometimes, they can come across as lacking empathy, pompous, impractical, or judgmental.

Different Aspects: You could be the Scientist, the Scholar, the Teacher, the Critic, the Keeper of Knowledge, the Elder, the Judge, or the Old Guard.

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### As a pilgrim...

You feel detached from humanity, set apart from your peers by your skepticism and your desire for true knowledge. Yet, at the same time, you are irrationally faithful, and on this journey you seek to feel a higher power move within you, to give you a sign that the faith you hold is part of the truth.

What caused you to think that you need verification of your faith?

What question do you hope the Divine can answer?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
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- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe where and how your greatest epiphany happened:*

## The Creator/Inventor/Artist/Dreamer

“Beauty is truth, and truth beauty. That is all ye know and all ye need know.”

### As an archetype...

The Creator is constantly working, seeking to realize their vision, and in doing so, to come to understand themselves, and where they stand in relation to the world. The Creator seeks to develop their artistic skill and their artistic control, and fears personal inauthenticity. At their best, they seek to better the world through innovation, from small innovations that impact daily life, to the largest scale projects. At their worst, they get mired by their own sense of perfectionism, their own imposter syndrome, and they can be messy, impoverished, prima-donna workaholics, always seeking a new project to fill the void inside of them.

Different Aspects: You could be the Genius, the Craftsperson, the Uncorrupted, the Daydreamer, the Inventor, the Burn-Out, the Diva, or the Perfectionist.

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### As a pilgrim...

You decided to go on this journey after your last creation flopped. Now, although you have been busy, your heart isn't really in it anymore and you are thinking about giving up your art. By the end of this journey, either you will have found new, divine inspiration, or you know your creative life is over.

What was your intention in your last creation? What didn't your audience see?  
What form did your creations take when you still believed in your ability?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe your most personal creation:*

## The Outcast/Wanderer

"To thine own self be true."

### As an archetype...

The Outcast has been exiled from the community for a real or imagined crime. They march to the beat of their own drummer, but can be obstinate and fearful of change. They represent the human fear of not belonging, mixed with the human drive to be an individual, differentiating oneself from everyone else. The Outcast longs for the past, to be accepted, loved, and forgiven. At the same time, they fear that forgiveness, for community living means ties to the here and now, and responsibility to those whom they love.

Different Aspects: You could be the Other, the Criminal, the Loner, the Misunderstood, the Apostate, the Searcher, the Coward, the Anachronism, or the Self-Sufficient.

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### As a pilgrim...

Long ago you committed were banished from your community for what they saw as a serious crime.. Since then, you have been wandering, trying to do right by your beliefs. On this journey, you hope to finally come to terms with your past and find a way back into the community, and into peace.

What did you do that your community could not accept? How could you do it?  
What gave you the determination to find your way back now?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, the moment when you realized you could not return to your original home:*



## The Magician/Shaman

"It's all in me."

### As an archetype...

The Magician is powerful and seeks to understand the rules of the universe, and transform situations according to their will. They can see the other side of reality. At their best, they help set the path of the good in motion. At their worst, they can become cult-like figures that slip into using their power for personal gain, or their power can have unintended consequences.

Different Aspects: You could be the Shaman, the Arcane Scholar, the Cult Leader, the Fanatic, the Insane, the Influencer, the Priest, or the Devil Worshipper.

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### As a pilgrim...

Many in your community are sick or dying, and have sent you on this pilgrimage to discover a ritual or actual cure for the malady. Perhaps they have done something wrong for the higher powers to punish them so?

Why did you fail to heal the community before you left on the pilgrimage?

What sins does your community suffer from?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
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*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the secret truth you have learned through your efforts:*

## The Ruler

“The measure of a person is what they do with power.”

### As an archetype...

The Ruler’s goal is to bring order to their surroundings; implied is the idea that success will follow. They represent the human desire to be constructive, to exercise power and control, to take responsibility for oneself, and in doing all this, to produce an effective society. On the flip side, sometimes the Ruler’s love of sovereignty and control can manifest as rigid, tyrannical entitlement or elitism.

Different Aspects: You could be the Representative, the Demagogue, the Tyrant, the Politician, the Boss, the Elder, the Architect, the Defender of Order, or the Visionary.

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### As a pilgrim...

You hold some civic responsibility in your hometown, and are coming on this pilgrimage to demonstrate your piety, and to affirm that your authority and ability are divine gifts. Privately, you wonder whether you are a sham, and whether the divine exists at all.

What do your people look up to in you? What have you promised them?

When was the last time you asked something or someone above you for help?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the place that is your center of power:*

## The Orphan/Regular Person

“Before the higher powers, all people are equally wise and equally foolish.”

### As an archetype...

The Orphan is just a regular, working stiff, y'all. The Orphan doesn't want to be left out, but also doesn't want to stand out. They represent the everyman, seeking to regain the state of secure love and protection from harm. They don't have high expectations of life, and at their best are realists who possess both empathy and street smarts, and who are able to process pain clearly. At their worst, they are chronic complainers who suffer from a victim mentality, and they fear losing their individuality by blending in to the surroundings too well.

Different Aspects: You could be the Worker, the Wage Slave, the Family Man/Woman, the Citizen, the Discontent, the Sheep, or the True Patriot.

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### As a pilgrim...

You've recently been forced out of your regular life due to something beyond your control. You are feeling powerless and alone without the reliability of your old patterns. You have come on this journey to discover how to carry on in this unfamiliar world.

What changed in your life that meant you could no longer stay in your groove?  
What foreign things have you been forced to do since?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

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*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the most important ceremony of your day:*

## The Warrior

"Here I come to save the day!"

### As an archetype...

The Warrior uses courage to prove themselves to the world. They represent humanity's ability to persevere in the face of obstacles. At their best they fight (not necessarily physically) for what really matters, and use discipline to achieve their aims. At their worst, the Warrior can be arrogant, ruthless, and paranoid that every interaction is a challenge. They can be stoic, but can also become addicted to fight, and ceaselessly seek another battle. Their greatest fear is to be seen as weak or a "chicken."

Different Aspects: You could be the Soldier, the Enforcer, the Protester, the Cop, the Barbarian, the General, the Athlete, the Tough, or the Brawler..

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### As a pilgrim...

You have been fighting (not necessarily physically) for what you think is right for too long. You are tired of the battles, and have come on this journey seeking a reason to continue the fight.

Who were you fighting when you first lost your enthusiasm for the fight?

What did you think you were fighting for, and why don't you think that's sufficient now?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

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*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the bravest moment of your life:*

## [FACILITATOR ROLE] The Sage

"The truth shall set you free."

### As an archetype...

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- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe where and how your greatest epiphany happened:* **The**

## [FACILITATOR ROLE] Magician/Shaman

"It's all in me."

### As an archetype...

The Magician is powerful and seeks to understand the rules of the universe, and transform situations according to their will. They can see the other side of reality. At their best, they help set the path of the good in motion. At their worst, they can become cult-like figures that slip into using their power for personal gain, or their power can have unintended consequences.

Different Aspects: You could be the Shaman, the Arcane Scholar, the Cult Leader, the Fanatic, the Insane, the Influencer, the Priest, or the Devil Worshipper.

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### As a pilgrim...

Many in your community are sick or dying, and have sent you on this pilgrimage to discover a ritual or actual cure for the malady. Perhaps they have done something wrong for the higher powers to punish them so?

Why did you fail to heal the community before you left on the pilgrimage?

What sins does your community suffer from?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the secret truth you have learned through your efforts:*

## [FACILITATOR ROLE] The Explorer

"I am prepared to go anywhere, provided it be forward."

### As an archetype....

The Explorer seeks to discover their most authentic self out in the world, braving unfamiliar surroundings and isolation in order to experience the delight the world has to offer. The exploration need not mean "travel," but travel is a good metaphor--the Explorer seeks to be true to their most authentic self by surrounding themselves with foreign things. They fear conformity and feeling trapped in a place--at extremes, their peripatetic nature can cause them to be self-centered and rootless--simply fleeing to a new environment at the first sign of trouble. At their best, they are centered in themselves and competent in a wide variety of situations. At their worst, they are perfectionists, allergic to commitment, chronically disappointed, alienated and lonely.

Different Aspects: You could be the Researcher, the Traveller, the Social Butterfly, the Journalist, the Thrill-Seeker, the Dilettante, the Collector, the Observer, or the Guide.

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### As a pilgrim...

You are fleeing something on your last journey that challenged your faith in the world, and now you're here with all these strangers trying to work out what the higher powers have been trying to show you, or whether there is any message at all.

What did you discover that you couldn't accept?

Why is this pilgrimage different from your previous adventures?

*Select and circle one from each row:*

- *Issue:* Business, Family, Social
- *Crisis:* Doubt, Betrayal, Loss
- *Risk:* Status, Well-Being, Identity

*Describe the issue in one sentence here:*

*Name:*

*Age:*

*Profession:*

*In one sentence, describe the most magical thing you ever discovered on your journeys:*

## The Explorer (facilitator role)

"I am prepared to go anywhere, provided it be forward."

### As an archetype....

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*Name:*

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# *(THIS MIRACLE EXPANSION)* BE AN ANTHROPOLOGIST!

This is a 15-minute micro game that you can play alone, or with a couple friends. Over here in the “museum,” you can see a set of ancient artifacts from a recently-discovered human religion. As an anthropologist, your job is to interpret these artifacts, and figure out what they communicate about the cultures that produced them. Some of the artifacts have context--we know which myths they are meant to represent. Some of them do not.

Use your skills of deduction to learn about these cultures and get the fame (and possibly tenure) that you deserve!

If you wish, you may assume one of the following characters:

**The Tenured Professor.** You've got it made at the big university, and you're known as an authority in the field. You love the sound of your own voice and think it's quite possible that your judgment as a scholar is infallible.

**The Associate Professor.** You really, really, want tenure and need to prove yourself to the big-wigs on the committee. Your strategy is to make bold claims about ancient cultures, regardless of whether there is proof, and then to use your words to justify them.

**The Adjunct.** You are a put-upon graduate student teaching college classes for slave wages. You long to get full time work as an associate or even--god willing--a tenured professor. In the meantime, you will try to brown-nose your betters in hopes of getting a promotion. Unfortunately, when they say something truly stupid, you have trouble keeping your mouth shut.