

THE PALADIN

THIS IS PLAYTEST MATERIAL

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The paladin is the divine warrior, blending fighter with cleric. More than a crusader or myrmidon, the paladin combines divine magical power with an unmatched resolve and faith to become the blade of its oaths. Moreso than its class peers, the paladin is built for combat, relying on its high Charisma to manage social pillars and its spells and will to tackle exploration challenges. A paladin is a capable half spellcasting with a range of defensive and recovery spells along with utility spells, but it also a capable warrior able to face the strongest threats head-on with weapon in hand empowered by divine might.

The paladin is the best class because it is its party shield and its sword. With powerful aura, useful spells, and the ability to stand in the front line, the paladin protects its allies. With a spell, or even a mere touch, the paladin restores its allies back to fighting form. When a powerful threatens that which the paladin cares for, the paladin summons divine force to smite its foes and drive them back to the shadows from whence they crawled. The paladin is the champion others can lean upon.

OPTIONAL CLASS FEATURES

The paladin class receives new features and subclasses in this section. You gain class features in the *Player's Handbook* when you reach certain levels in your class. This section offers additional features you can gain as a paladin. Unlike features in the *Player's Handbook*, you don't gain the features here automatically. Consult with your DM on whether you gain a feature in this section if you meet the requirements. These features can be selected separately from one another; you can use some, all, or none of them.

If you take a feature that replaces another feature, you gain no benefit from the replaced feature and don't qualify for anything in the game that requires it.

FIGHTING STYLE OPTIONS

When you choose a new fighting style, the following styles are added to your list of options.

SWORN WEAPON

After finishing a long rest, choose one weapon in which you are proficient. Until you choose a different weapon through this fighting style, when you attack with that

weapon, you can use your Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier (your choice), instead of Strength or Dexterity, for the attack and damage rolls.

VERSATILE FIGHTING

When you make an attack with a weapon that has the versatile property with one hand, you have a +2 bonus on attack rolls with it, provided you aren't holding a second weapon or a shield. When you make an attack with a weapon with the versatile property with two hands, you have a +2 bonus on damage rolls with it.

DEDICATED SMITE

2nd-level Paladin feature which replaces the Divine Smite feature

Paladin smite spells (banishing smite, blinding smite, branding smite, disrupting smite, searing smite, staggering smite, and wrathful smite) no longer require concentration, but you can only have one of them in effect at a time. You can cast one of them without expending a spell slot, and can't do so again until until you finish a long rest unless cast it using a spell slot normally.

A spell cast through this feature is treated as if cast by a 1st-level spell slot. As you reach certain levels in this class, the slot level it is cast at increases at: 5th (2nd level spell slot), 9th (3rd level spell slot), 13th (4th level spell slot), and 17th level (5th level spell slot).

MANTLE OPTIONS

If you have access to psionic mantles, the following mantles are added to the list of options available to you. Mantles are available to paladins of the Oath of the Ardent from the *Psionic and Spiritual Handbook*.

MANIPULATION

Aura. You and friendly creatures have advantage on Charisma checks made to deceive or coerce a creature.

Shroud. Once each round, when a creature within 30 feet of you that you can see makes an attack roll or ability check, you can use your reaction to have it reroll the d20 and you choose which roll it keeps.

Powers. You know the following powers: *puppetry*, *suspension*.

NIGHT

Aura. You and friendly creatures have darkvision up to 90 feet.

Shroud. You can see in magical darkness. As a bonus action, you can create a cloud of magical darkness that covers up to a 15-foot radius sphere centered on you. You can use a bonus to dismiss the cloud.

Powers. You know the following powers: *enveloping darkness*, *starcall*.

PAIN

Aura. Once each turn when a creature you hit with a melee weapon takes 1 psychic damage each time it takes damage until the end of your next turn.

Shroud. You gain immunity to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against effects that cause pain, including the illusion of pain.

Powers. You know the following powers: *ego whip*, *living weapon*.

PESTILENCE

Aura. Each foe has disadvantage on saving throws against poison damage, the poisoned condition, and disease.

Shroud. Your creature type becomes undead, granting you resistance to cold, necrotic, and poison damage. If you are reduced to 0 hit points, you immediately regain a number of hit points equal to your level in this class and the shroud ends.

Powers. You know the following powers: *decay*, *shatter psyche*.

REVERBERATION

Aura. After you deal damage with a melee weapon, you can deal its weapon damage again, but can't benefit from this aura again until the end of your next turn.

Shroud. Whenever you fail on a saving throw, other than the initial save, against an effect that requires you to make a new saving throw, you can reroll the save and choose which roll to keep. If you fail a saving throw, you can activate this shroud as a reaction, and can maintain its effects even if you are incapacitated.

Powers. You know the following powers: *harmonics*, *telekinetic flight*.

SPACE

Aura. Whenever a creature teleports out of or into the aura, you can choose its destination within the aura.

Shroud. You can teleport up to 30 feet as a bonus action.

Powers. You know the following powers: *dimensional breach*, *singularity*.

THE PLANES

Aura. You and friendly creatures always know which way is north and your relative distance to a known location. You automatically know the location of major feature such as the City of Brass, the River Styx, or Roots of Yggdrasil.

Shroud. You are under the effects of the protection from evil and good spell that applies to aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and any creature not native to the Material Plane.

Powers. You know the following powers: *dimensional disassociation*, *ectoplasmic creation*.

TIME

Aura. You and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you are immune to the slow spell and similar effects and the stasis condition.

Shroud. When you are hit by an attack, you can use your reaction to have it miss instead. Once you take this reaction, you can't take it again until the end of your next turn regardless of any magical, psionic, or other effects.

Powers. You know the following powers: *speed of thought*, *stasis*.

SACRED OATHS

The following options are available to you when you choose your Sacred Oath: Oath of Chivalry, Oath of Crescent Light, Oath of Inspiration, and Oath of the Sohei.

OATH OF CHIVALRY

A paladin of this oath is the legendary knight in shining armor. They are exemplars of true nobility and honor. These chevaliers are the vanguard against evil and lawless discord, upholding the tenets of civilization. Under the Oath of Chivalry, a paladin serves the interests of the people and is the enemy of tyrants, championing the cause of justice.

TENETS OF CHIVALRY

Courtesy, honor, and courage are the core traits of these paladins. When land or people cry out for a champion, these paladins ride into the heart of darkness to quell it.

Uphold Courtesy. Be polite to all, for no man or woman stands above another.

Courage in the Face of Danger. When the land is threatened, you confront the threat without hesitation.

Honor above Convenience. You never seek to sully your name for expedience.

Duty before Gain. Your gains are measured in reputation for adhering to your word and pledge.

OATH SPELLS FEATURE

3rd-level Oath of Chivalry feature

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how oath spells work. Each spell is in the *Player's Handbook*, unless it has an asterisk, in which case it is in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

OATH OF CHIVALRY SPELLS

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	<i>command, compelled duel</i>
5th	<i>find steed, warding bond</i>
9th	<i>protection from energy, tongues</i>
13th	<i>find greater steed*, freedom of movement</i>
17th	<i>dispel evil and good, greater restoration</i>

BORN TO THE SADDLE

3rd-level Oath of Chivalry feature

Your mastery as a rider becomes apparent. You have advantage on saving throws made to avoid falling off your mount. If you fall off your mount and descend no more than 10 feet, you can land on your feet if you're not incapacitated.

Finally, mounting or dismounting a creature costs you only 5 feet of movement, rather than half your speed.

CHANNEL DIVINITY FEATURE

3rd-level Oath of Chivalry feature

You gain the following two Channel Divinity options. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how Channel Divinity works.

Noble Cant. When make a Charisma check to influence a creature, you have advantage on the check and each additional Charisma check you make to influence that creature for 1 minute.

Lead the Attack. After hitting a creature with a melee weapon attack, you can direct one of your companions to strike. When you do so, choose a friendly creature who can hear you. That creature can immediately use its reaction to make one weapon attack with advantage. On a hit, it deals 1d8 extra radiant damage to its target.

PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

7th-level Oath of Chivalry feature

Acting as the sword of justice, you grant the wicked no quarter. Whenever a foe provokes an opportunity attack from you, you have advantage on your attack roll. On a hit, you can choose to move up to your speed with the target. If the opportunity attack reduces your target to 0 hit points, you immediately regain the use of your reaction.

If you are mounted, you move up to your mount's speed instead of your own. If your mount can make opportunity attacks, it also has advantage on its attack roll, but it doesn't regain the use of its reaction early for reducing a target to 0 hit points.

WAR VETERAN

15th-level Oath of Chivalry feature

Whenever you are below half your maximum hit point count, you have damage resistance to bludgeon, piercing, psychic, and slashing damage.

GRACE OF THE CHEVALIER

20th-level Oath of Chivalry feature

As an action, you become the embodiment of knightly valor. You gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- Whenever you deal damage with your Improved Divine Smite feature, you deal the maximum damage.
- Your movement, including when you are mounted, never provokes opportunity attacks and you can move through the space of any creature without expending extra movement.
- You and your mount have resistance to ranged damage.
- Allies in range of your Aura of Protection feature retain its benefit during this time, even if you move out of range.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend a 5th-level spell slot to use it again.

OATH OF CRESCENT LIGHT

Known for the curve of their bows, the paladins of this oath are divine hunters. They serve as scouts and wardens in times of peace, and sacred archers when war calls. Some paladins revere gods of the moon, and many hold ceremonies under moonlight.

TENETS OF CRESCENT LIGHT

Those under the Oath of Crescent Light follow many beliefs, but certain tenets are represented among all of them.

Purity. Remain pure of body and deed.

Observe the Sacred Hunt. Never hunt or kill for sport.

Judge only Deeds. The creatures of the realms keep to their own traditions. Save your judgment for those aspects that harm the innocent, not those that offend another's sensibilities.

OATH SPELLS FEATURE

3rd-level Oath of Crescent Light feature

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how oath spells work. Each spell is in the *Player's Handbook*, unless it has an asterisk, in which case it is in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.

OATH OF CRESCENT LIGHT SPELLS

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	<i>longstrider, sanctuary</i>
5th	<i>moonbeam, warding wind*</i>
9th	<i>flame arrows*, lightning arrow</i>
13th	<i>dimension door, locate creature</i>
17th	<i>conjure volley, swift quiver</i>

CHANNEL DIVINITY

3rd-level Oath of Crescent Light feature

You gain the following two Channel Divinity options. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how Channel Divinity works.

Lunar Ward. When an ally you can see within 60 feet of you is hit by an attack, you can use your reaction to shroud that ally in barrier of soft moonlight, increasing its AC by 4 until the end of the turn, possibly turning a hit into a miss.

Repulsion. When a creature you see moves into a space within 30 feet of you or starts its turn there, you can use your reaction to make an attack against it with ranged weapon you hold. On a hit, the creature takes normal weapon damage and must spend 2 feet of movement for each foot moved toward you.

DIVINE REACH

7th-level Oath of Crescent Light feature

Attacks you make with a ranged weapon can deliver your Divine Smite feature, as well as any paladin spell that requires you hit a target with a melee weapon. A target must be within your ranged weapon's normal range. After you have used this feature, you can't do so again until the start of your next turn.

STILL NIGHT

15th-level Oath of Crescent Light feature

A creature which receives your Lunar Ward has damage resistance against all damage for 1 minute or until it has taken damage a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once).

MOON BOW

20th-level Oath of Crescent Light feature

As an action, you transform in the divine hunter or huntress. You stand taller than normal and your eyes become shining points of light. You gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- You and each creature you hit with a ranged attack are bathed in moonlight. A creature bathed in moonlight can't benefit from the invisible condition.
- Whenever you deal damage with a bow or crossbow, you can convert all of the damage you deal to radiant damage.
- You gain blindsight to a distance of 300 feet.
- Your speed increases by 10 feet, and you can jump up to your speed without a running start.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend a 5th-level spell slot to use it again.

OATH OF INSPIRATION

Those of the Oath of Inspiration are great orators who seek to encourage others to be better than they are. They champion causes that others abandon, and instill virtue in those who have fallen by the wayside. Always a smile and word of praise, these paladins rally those left behind.

TENETS OF INSPIRATION

Paladins who take the Oath of Inspiration seek to lift the spirits of all people and disparage none. They are motivating figures who seek to spur others on to greatness.

Champion the Weak. Always lift the spirits of the downtrodden.

Always Be Positive. Build others up, never tear them down.

Banish Your Dread. Never betray a visage of grief or fear, always be joyous and confident.

OATH SPELLS

3rd-level Oath of Inspiration feature

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how oath spells work. Each spell is in the *Player's Handbook*, unless it has an asterisk, in which case it is in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*. If you don't have access to *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, substitute *dream* for *skill empowerment*.

OATH OF INSPIRATION SPELLS

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	<i>bless, heroism</i>
5th	<i>aid, calm emotions</i>
9th	<i>beacon of hope, mass healing word</i>
13th	<i>aura of purity, freedom of movement</i>
17th	<i>dispel evil and good, skill empowerment*</i>

CHANNEL DIVINITY

3rd-level Oath of Inspiration feature

You gain the following two Channel Divinity options. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how Channel Divinity works.

Oratory. By spending 1 minute speaking and inspiring others to unify and achieve a common cause, each creature which can hear and understand you within 30 feet can add 1d6 to a single attack roll, damage roll, or ability check it chooses to achieve that goal. This bonus must be used within the next hour or it is lost.

Uplift. As an action, you can uplift the spirits of one creature. You remove the charmed, frightened, paralyzed, and unsettled† conditions from the target, and for 1 minute it is immune to those conditions. The unsettled condition is introduced in the *Psychic and Spiritual Handbook* by Therin Creative.

RALLY

7th-level Oath of Inspiration feature

You emanate grace and temerity. When you or an ally reduce a foe within 30 feet of you to 0 hit points with a weapon attack, you can use your reaction to grant each ally within 30 feet of you temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1).

INSPIRE

15th-level Oath of Inspiration feature

When you heal a creature other than you for at least 5 hit points with your Lay on Hands feature or a paladin spell, you inspire it. Once within the next minute, the creature can roll a d8 and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until it rolls the d20 before deciding to use this bonus die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

GRACE OF VIRTUE

20th-level Oath of Inspiration feature

As an action, you become a beacon of light and hope. You gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- Each creature you choose, other than you, within 30 feet of you can add your Charisma modifier (minimum 1) to its first attack and damage roll each round on its turn.
- Once at the start of each of your turns, you and each creature you choose within 30 feet of you can attempt a new saving throw against one effect with a duration that still affects it.
- When you roll a saving throw against spell from the school of enchantment or necromancy or a power from the telepathy discipline, you treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10. Psionic powers and the telepathy discipline are introduced in the *Psychic and Spiritual Handbook* by Therin Creative.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend a 5th-level spell slot to use it again.

OATH OF THE SOHEI

Sohei are warrior monks. They serve as defenders of temples and sacred sites. They are loyal to their faith and will defend their temples to the death if need be. Paladins of the Oath of the Sohei also tend to be militant.

TENETS OF THE SOHEI

Sohei serve as temple knights and protectors. They are trained and disciplined soldiers who are known to join allies in warfare. These paladins follow a set of tenets upholding the virtue of union.

Brotherhood. Don't act alone, you are a member of group. Your strength lies in your bonds.

Honor. Follow through on your commitments. Be unwavering in your principles.

Act as One. You follow your brothers in the temple. Your brothers follow you.

Unmoving in Battle. You stand firm and force your enemy to break before you.

OATH SPELLS

3rd-level Oath of the Sohei feature

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how oath spells work.

OATH OF THE SOHEI SPELLS

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	<i>bane, longstrider</i>
5th	<i>calm emotions, continual flame</i>
9th	<i>blinding smite, crusader's mantle</i>
13th	<i>aura of life, staggering smite</i>
17th	<i>greater restoration, seeming</i>

CHANNEL DIVINITY

3rd-level Oath of the Sohei feature

You gain the following two Channel Divinity options. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how Channel Divinity works.

Chastise. As an action, you present your holy symbol and recite a litany. One creature you choose within 30 feet of you must make a Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, the first time within the next minute that the creature attacks someone other than you, it takes force damage equal to 2d8 + half your paladin level and suffers a -2 penalty to AC until the start of its next turn.

Divine Inspiration. As an action, you can infuse yourself with devotion. For 1 minute you add your Charisma modifier to ability checks (with a minimum bonus of +1).

TEMPLE TACTICS

7th-level Oath of the Sohei feature

Whenever you strike a foe with a melee weapon attack, each of your allies gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls against it until the start of your next turn.

DEFLECT ARMS

15th-level Oath of the Sohei feature

When you are hit by a melee weapon attack, you can use your reaction to reduce the damage by 1d10 + your Strength modifier + your paladin level. You must hold a melee weapon or shield, or have an empty hand to use this feature.

If you reduce the damage to 0, you gain advantage on your next attack roll made against your attacker, and if this attack hits, you deal extra weapon damage equal to half your paladin level.

FERVOR

20th-level Oath of the Sohei feature

As an action, you take on a psychic focus. Psionic energies ripple across your body like bands of electricity. You gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- Your movement speed increases by 20 feet and is unaffected by difficult terrain.
- Your jump distance and height is tripled.
- You can run along walls as if on ground.
- Your movement speed can't be reduced by magical means
- If you hit with a melee weapon attack, you can take a bonus action to make an unarmed strike that deals 1d8 + your Strength modifier damage.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend a 5th-level spell slot to use it again.

MAKING YOUR OWN PALADIN SUBCLASS

YOU MAY DECIDE THAT YOU WANT TO CREATE YOUR own paladin subclass that best fits your campaign. Before embarking on this task, you want to be sure that no existing paladin subclass meets your design goals. One of the greatest flexibilities offered in 5e class design is how open it is to re flavor the features. If there is a subclass that can meet your mechanical needs and stylistic vision, it is best to simply use that and save a lot of time in designing, writing, and playtesting.

If, however, you find that no existing subclass achieves the fantasy or has the mechanics to match your vision, this section will guide you toward making a paladin subclass that fits the 5e D&D model. The guidelines will help you create the features for your subclass and detail how you should balance the class to fit within the official options and those offered by Therin Creative and similar content creators.

Please note that despite the guidance offered herein, your subclass may need further tuning. Be certain to spend the time to playtest your subclass.

CLASS CHASSIS

The paladin is warrior with several features that is also a half spellcaster. It requires Charisma for its spellcasting and other features, but Strength for its weapons. Constitution is also desirable since most paladins choose to go into harm's way. Given that the paladin seeks these three scores, you don't want to introduce another ability score need to the class.

HIT DICE

The paladin has a d10 Hit Dice, and is only bested by the fighter and barbarian in raw ability to absorb damage when you factor its AC.

PROFICIENCIES

The paladin can use any weapon and armor, preferring heavy armor and strong weapons. It has minimal skill proficiencies, something that a subclass can expand.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

The paladin uses standard progression for the Ability Score Improvement (ASI) feature (4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level). Paladins shouldn't gain additional ASI features as that is the domain of the fighter and rogue classes and not something a subclass generally grants.

SPELLCASTING

The paladin has the spellcasting feature and is a prepared spellcaster. The paladin spell list is replete with supportive and healing spells, as well as auxiliary damage through the smite spells. Each paladin subclass also grants the paladin extra spells it always has prepared, that when paired with the class's ability to swap spells after every long rest, grant it a lot of flexibility in its spell choice.

RIBBON FEATURES

The paladin doesn't feature much in the way of ribbon features — its focus is on combat and recovery. Even

paladin subclasses rarely expand on ribbon features, creating a sort of anti-niche for the class. It makes up for this via its spellcasting feature.

LAY ON HANDS

A classic feature of the paladin class, Lay on Hands provides it bonus healing capability which can recover hit points or even remove certain conditions and disease. Because of this, there is limited value in enhancing the paladin's recovery options through its subclasses.

AURA FEATURES

Fairly unique to the paladin class are auras. These are emanations from the paladin that bolster its allies or hinder its foes. Subclasses frequently add one additional aura, and all auras have a 10-foot reach until 18th level when they are boosted to 30 feet.

OATH FEATURES

Sacred oaths grant features at 3rd, 7th, 15th, and 20th level. Take note that the paladin, unlike every other official class, gets its capstone (the 20th-level feature) from its subclass.

PALADINS HAVE DIVINE SMITE

The paladin class has the Divine Smite feature that allows it to transform each unused spell slot into a radiant damage rider on its attacks. For this reason, you don't need to add damage spell options to the paladin class, especially instantaneous damage spells since they would compete with the class's core kit, be generally unnecessary, and, in the case of area spells, explode paladin damage outside its intended range.

BUILDING A SACRED OATH

Once you understand the class chassis, you're one step closer to building a subclass. You'll also want to review existing subclasses to get a feel for their design and balance. This section will aid you in understanding what your subclass features should accomplish.

Before starting on the formal work to build your subclass, devise its theme and role. What is your subclass's purpose? What roles does it fill in an adventuring party? How are its mechanics interesting and unique? Why would a player choose your subclass?

Let's start by looking at some existing sacred oaths.

Devotion. The exemplary paladin, the Oath of Devotion is the paladin sworn to the light and goodness. It serves as the champion of the weak and purges the darkness. Players choose this archetype because they want to be true paladin that upholds justice and who confronts evil in all of its forms.

Vengeance. The Oath of Vengeance is the oath for those that seek out its foes in the shadows they lurk. These paladins can be the burning light that incinerates evil or champions of revenge that opt to make others suffer equally for the suffering they have inflicted. Players choose this archetype to be sword to avenge just or seek revenge on a wrong, granting no quarry to the wicked.

Conquest. Short of the antipaladin Oathbreaker blackguard, the Oath of Conquest is seen as the evil playable paladin with its focus on domination, often through violence. However, conquest can also be used as a tool to vanquish evil and autocracy. Players choose this archetype because they want to vanquish their foes in absolute certainty and to rule over others.

Glory. The Oath of Glory aims to be the hero of legend that accomplishes the labors set before it. This oath is often regarded as the most athletic of sacred oaths. Players choose this archetype as it aspires to become a living legend through noble deed and tenacity.

Inspiration. The cheerleader of paladins, the Oath of Inspiration fills a sort of middle ground between paladin and bard, offering features that enhance its party. Players choose this archetype because they want to be the beacon of hope that inspires their fellows and lift up the downtrodden.

Each paladin subclass encapsulates a certain theme, but at its core, each is a paladin, leveraging its class kit to serve its oath.

BUILDING THE SUBCLASS

This guide covers building a sacred oath consistent with official published material. Each oath clearly identifies its theme. The oath features should help to establish and, more importantly, enable this theme.

Subclass features are granted at 3rd, 7th, 15th, and 20th level. Unlike most other classes, sacred oath features are fairly formulaic, which can make it one of the easier subclasses to design. Except for 3rd level, each Sacred Oath feature should only grant one subclass feature. Consult the Paladin Subclass Features table for when you should grant features.

There are exceptions for the rule of only granting a single subclass feature:

- Ribbon features are frequently weak on their own, so in certain cases you may grant a second, minor feature, which could be another ribbon feature.
- The feature has some complex interactions that are much clearer when separated. Often this is indication that something should be cut, but in rare cases, it makes sense to split a feature for comprehension.
- You are expanding an existing feature in a minor way. Sometimes it's better to include the enhancement in the core feature, and at other times it could be a note in another feature.

TENETS

While not a feature, since it has no gameplay mechanic, the tenets of a Sacred Oath are vital for the paladin subclass. Its tenets set its theme, identifying what personalities and ambitions of paladins would choose it. You should begin with the tenets of your subclass, and aim for at least three unique tenets, but ideally four or even five.

After drafting your tenets, compare them to existing sacred oaths, and if you find any overlap, you should rethink your concept. You want to carve out a new niche for the class that takes it in a new direction. If you find there is thematic alliance, such as how the Oaths of Devotion, Inspiration, and Redemption all seem to seek common cause, that is alright, as long as your oath focuses on one aspect of that cause. As an example of the above case, the Oath of Devotion protects, the Oath of Inspiration uplifts, and the Oath of Redemption saves and atones.

PALADIN SUBCLASS FEATURES

Paladin Level	Feature
3rd	Oath Spells, Channel Divinity Options
7th	Aura Feature
15th	Defensive Feature
20th	Form Feature

OATHS SPELLS

3rd-level [Your Paladin Subclass] feature

All paladins gain additional spells upon taking their Sacred Oath. Choose two spells each from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th level. The spell can come from any list, including the paladin list, and the spells should match the theme of the oath. This feature should ensure the Sacred Oath has the spells of its tenets always ready; this feature isn't an excuse to grant the paladin the best spells from other classes, and you will likely choose some spells from the paladin list.

If you include spells from sources other than the *Player's Handbook*, you want to indicate those sources. If you are sharing the subclass, you can't reprint content that is not provided by the publishing license you are using (for instance, don't reprint a spell description from *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*).

If you do include spells outside the *Player's Handbook*, it is recommended that you offer alternative spells from it so groups without the referenced book can utilize your content without additional work on the DM's part. If the spell is one you created for the subclass, include its description after the subclass (or an appropriate section for a compendium of content).

THE OATH OF THE ARDENT IS AN EXCEPTION

As a psychic class, the Oath of the Ardent doesn't have the Oath Spells feature. Instead, it has the Power Manifesting features that enable the subclass to manifest psionic powers with its spell slots. If you make a subclass that utilizes a similar alternate mechanic to spells, you will likely also want to replace the Oath Spells feature similarly. Any replacement should expend spell slots in ways that take the same action interactions as spells do — mainly actions, with some bonus action and reaction options, with many requiring concentration.

[YOUR PALADIN SUBCLASS] SPELLS

Paladin Level	Spell
3rd	1st-level spell, 1st-level spell
5th	2nd-level spell, 2nd-level spell
9th	3rd-level spell, 3rd-level spell
13th	4th-level spell, 4th-level spell
17th	5th-level spell, 5th-level spell

CHANNEL DIVINITY OPTIONS

3rd-level [Your Paladin Subclass] feature

This feature grants the paladin subclass two options to use its Channel Divinity feature. Without this feature, the paladin class can't use one of its core features, so you must have this feature. The options must be thematic to the tenets and theme of the subclass. You want one to be useful in combat, increasing the paladin's power in the short term. The other is well served to grant the paladin utility that the class and subclass kit generally lacks outside of spells, but this isn't a rule. Make sure the options are likely to get used once per short rest; paladins are designed to consume the use of its Channel Divinity feature each rest.

Based on what the option does, choose an appropriate action cost. In-combat buffs should be bonus actions. Attack riders should be either reactions or require no action, the latter case especially if the effect is instantaneous. Out of combat or pre-combat effects should require an action, as should effects with a duration of 10 minutes or more. No option should require concentration.

Since paladins have a strong offensive baseline and should gain an offensive Channel Divinity option, you need to be careful with how big a boost your option gives. Assume the paladin uses it twice per adventuring day when budgeting (assume extra uses are on noncombat purposes).

AURA FEATURE

7th-level [Your Paladin Subclass] feature

Most Sacred Oaths offer a new aura for the paladin. This aura should feed into the theme of the class. It can be defensive or offensive based on the goals of the oath, and this is an area where you can see some damage bloat on your paladin subclass. For this reason, you need to carefully balance the aura's effect since they are passive, and see how it impacts the full class budget. With defensive, or even utility, auras, you have a lot more leeway.

You don't need to create an aura feature, and can replace this feature with an Expansion or Enhancement feature. This is a particularly useful trick if you want to create an offensive effect, but an aura is simply too powerful. You can also replace the aura nature of the feature if it would be redundant, such as with the Oath of Vengeance's Relentless Avenger feature and many of the Sacred Oaths in this supplement that triggers on melee attacks (which presumptively would fall inside an aura).

DEFENSIVE FEATURE

15th-level [Your Paladin Subclass] feature

The Defensive feature for a sacred oath tends to be fairly versatile, and can include an offensive component that is triggered by getting attacked. It is important that you pick an option that is thematic to your Sacred Oath.

While most Sacred Oaths use a Defensive Expansion feature, that is one that adds something new to the class kit, you can choose to enhance another subclass feature. This is the case with the Oath of Vengeance; Soul of Vengeance grants the paladin a benefit against the target of its Vow of Enmity Channel Divinity.

Consult the Sacred Oath Defenses table to see how existing paladin subclasses utilized the Defensive feature.

SACRED OATH DEFENSES

Sacred Oath	Defense Example
Chivalry	damage resistance when injured
Conquest	reprisal damage on getting hit
Crescent Light	resistance to target of Channel Divinity
Devotion	always under effects of protection from evil and good spell
Glory	AC bonus on getting hit with possible counterattack
Inspiration	inspiration on healing
Redemption	automatically heal when injured
the Ancients	survive death once per long rest and immune to aging
the Ardent	mantle shroud (various effects)
the Sohei	deflect melee damage
the Watchers	reprisal damage on successful save
Vengeance	counterattack target of Vow of Enmity

FORM FEATURE

20th-level [Your Paladin Subclass] feature

The paladin capstone allows the paladin to temporarily gain great power. This can be a fun feature, but you want to be careful that you don't go overboard with it.

Enhance and expand the paladin's potential only in the ways it needs to be. This feature can certainly be a power boost, but since it should only affect one combat for the entire adventuring day, it shouldn't overpower your paladin subclass. If, during damage budgeting, you find yourself reducing other paladin features to accommodate this feature, you should switch tracks and redesign this feature to be less powerful. A capstone feature should be relevant and feel good to have, but can't be allowed to collapse the entire class's balance.