

Cult Classic

Game and illustrations by Brian R. Powers

Introduction

Cult Classic is a humorous role-playing card game, in which each player takes on the role of an emerging cult leader in the process of developing his own cult, and competes to build the most successful cult.

Number of Players: 2-6

Contents: 6 Leader Cards, 27 Follower Cards and 75 Cult Classic Cards

Object of the Game

The goal of the game is to lure more followers into your cult than your opponents. In order to attract followers your cult must begin by assembling its core set of beliefs. You will be able to attract more with the help of certain material assets you will gain. And of course you will have to employ a few dirty tricks in the process...

Types of Cards

Leader Each player has one of these cards. They represent you – a cult leader. There are 6 types of cult leaders each with a different special ability.

Follower Followers are the most important thing for a cult to have (without followers, you're just a crazy person with too much free time). A follower will have an attraction to certain types of cults. Each follower is worth a Cult Point. Some followers are dedicated to a certain ideal: A Dedicated Follower in a cult with a leader of the same type is worth two Cult Points

Belief These describe the teachings of your religion. Some give the appeal of one type of cult, others are a combination of two types. There is no restriction on which beliefs your cult can have (i.e. they do not have to be of the same type as your leader, or each other), but each cult can only have a maximum of 4 beliefs.

Asset These represent material assets of your cult. Some give you a bonus to attracting more followers, others give you points, and others provide unique benefits. Some have certain requirements your cult must meet before you can have them (number of Beliefs, Followers, etc).

Action These cards represent the many things that can happen to a cult. Most are one-time events while others have remaining effects (these are called Modifiers).

Cultivation These cards will help you get the edge on your opponents when competing for followers. Some are used to help yourself while others are used to hinder your opponents. The only time these cards can be played is during the "Cultivation Phase" of the game (see below).

Cult Type Symbols



Corporate



Eastern-Mystical



Nature



Psycho Therapeutic



Satirical



U.F.O.

Many cards (Leaders, Beliefs and some Assets) will have one or more of these symbols in the upper left-hand corner. While these cards are in your cult they will help to attract followers. On follower cards these symbols represent the types of cult the follower is attracted to.

Setup

- Each player picks a **Leader Card** at random and places it on the table in front of him.
- Each player is dealt 5 **Cult Classic Cards**, and the rest are placed in the middle of the table in a draw deck face-down. The discard pile will be right next to this. If you ever deplete the deck, reshuffle the discards and start the pile fresh.
- Put the **Follower Cards** in a deck, face-down, to the side of the table. The Follower discards will go next to this. If you deplete the Followers pile reshuffle the discards and start the pile fresh.

During the course of the game players will have cards in their hand and on the table in front of them face-up. The cards on the table are considered "in play" and describe your cult (your set of beliefs, your followers, who the leader is, etc).

When a card is removed from play it is either **DISCARDED** or **REMOVED FROM THE GAME**. If it is discarded, place it in the appropriate discard pile. If it is removed from the game, put it aside and forget about it until the game is over.

Gameplay

Pick a player to go first. Gameplay has two alternating phases: The **Player Turn Phase** and **Cultivation Phase**.

Player Turn Phase

Players take turns and play continues clockwise until the Cultivation Phase begins. A player's turn has the following steps:

- 1) **DISCARD (optional)**: You may discard up to three cards from your hand.
- 2) **DRAW**: Draw 1 card from the Cult Classic card deck and add it to your hand.
- 3) **REPLENISH HAND (optional)**: Draw enough additional cards from the Cult Classic card deck to bring your hand back to 5 cards.
- 4) **PLAY CARD(S)**: If you replenished your hand, then you may only play 1 card. Otherwise, you may play as many cards as you wish. You may play Beliefs, Assets and Action cards:
 - **Belief**: Place the Belief card on the table in front of you. This is now one of the central beliefs of your cult. You may not have more than 4 permanent beliefs in your cult. You may discard a belief to replace it with another one.
 - **Asset**: Place the Asset card on the table in front of you. This now represents an asset that your cult owns. Some assets have requirements your cult must meet before playing them. (e.g. 2 Followers, or 3 Beliefs)
 - **Actions & Modifiers**: To play an Action card simply read the card and do what it says. Unless the Action card is a 'Modifier' or specifies that it remains in play, it is placed in the discard pile after being played. Modifier cards must be played targeting a card in play of the type specified. The Modifier card should be placed underneath the affected card and remain with it as long as the affected card is in play (even if it moves from one cult to another).
- 4) **ADD TO FOLLOWER POOL (optional)**: At the end of your turn, you have the option of adding one Follower card from the follower deck to the Follower Pool, a small pile of face-down Follower cards in the middle of the table.

At the end of a player's turn if the number of Followers in the Follower Pool is equal to the number of players, then the **Cultivation Phase** begins. Otherwise the next player takes his turn.

Cultivation Phase

The Cultivation Phase of the game is the period when players compete to bring followers into their cults. Each Follower Card in the Follower Pool is "cultivated" one at a time as follows:

- 1) **REVEAL A FOLLOWER**: Flip a Follower Card from the Follower Pool face-up. *Note: A few special Followers may be immediately drawn into a cult if the right card is in play. This will be stated on the Follower Card. If this is the case, skip Play Cards and Resolution; the Follower card simply joins that cult.*
- 2) **PLAY CARDS**: Beginning with the player who just ended his turn during the Player Turn Phase (he will be the first player for each Follower during this Cultivation Phase), and proceeding clockwise, players play a cards face down from their hands. During Cultivation, players may only play one card at a time, thus allowing the other players a chance to respond; however, each player may play as many cards as he has in his hand. **Action cards and Assets cannot be played during Cultivation. They are only played during the Player Turn Phase.**
 - **Cultivation**: Cultivation cards may either help your chances of luring the Follower into your cult, or harm your opponents' chances. If the card targets an opponent's cult, place the card face down in front of him so he knows you're targeting him (although he won't know what you're doing). This is known as an **Attack**. If the card is of benefit to yourself (or if it affects all players equally), place the card face down in front of your own cult. This is known as a **Boost**. You may play a beneficial card on an opponent's cult, if you wish (although you normally would not want to).
 - **Belief**: You can employ a bait-and-switch tactic on the gullible followers by playing a Belief card

from your hand as a "Boost". This will only be a temporary Belief; after Resolution you must discard it. The Belief will give the same bonus to Attraction that a permanent Belief would, and you may exceed the 4 Belief limit with these temporary Beliefs.

- **Bluff:** If you want to be sneaky you may play any card from your hand on the table as a bluff, targeting either your own cult or an opponent's.
- **Pass:** If you have no cards you want to play right now, you may pass. If another player plays a card, you still have an opportunity to play cards, but if all other players pass then the opportunity for playing cards is gone.

Continue clockwise until all players have passed.

- 3) **RESOLUTION:** It's time to resolve who wins the Follower! Turn all of the cards played face-up. Each player totals his **Attraction**, a measure of how much the Follower is drawn to his cult. To do this, count how many times the symbol(s) on the Followers Card appears among your own cards (Assets, Beliefs, and Leader), then add the bonuses or penalties from other cards played on your cult during Cultivation. Whoever has the highest Attraction wins the Follower. The winner takes the Follower and adds it to his cult.

Resolving Ties: If two or more players tie for the highest Attraction, they should count the symbols on the Follower cards in their cults to break the tie. If the tie persists then the Follower simply cannot decide which cult to join and runs away – place them in the Follower discard pile.

- 4) **CLEAR PLAYED CARDS:** Place all the cards played during Cultivation into the discard pile, and proceed to cultivate the next Follower from the Follower Pool. Any bonuses and penalties from cards played DO NOT carry over to the next Follower. *Note – you do not have an opportunity to draw new cards between Followers. You must wait until the Player Turn Phase.*

When the Follower Pool is empty the **Cultivation Phase** is over and the **Player Turn Phase** begins again, continuing with the next player clockwise.

Cult Points



Each of these symbols appearing among your cards is worth a point. All followers are worth a point, and some Asset and Action cards are worth points as well. Collect these points to win! *(Note: These points are points towards winning the game, and they do not give you a bonus towards Attraction. This is important to understand!!)*

Dedicated Followers



Some followers are totally dedicated to a certain Cult Leader. It will state clearly "Dedicated Follower" on the card. If the Follower is in a cult led by a leader of the matching symbol then the Follower is worth **1 extra point**.

Contradictions

Some cards contradict others (the cards will clearly state this). Two cards that contradict cannot be a part of the same cult. If you already have a card in your cult that contradicts with a new card, you cannot play the new card. For example, if your Cult has the Belief "Silly Garb" you would be unable to win the Follower card "Naked Nudists" (Nudists would never join a cult that had a dress code!). Conversely if the "Naked Nudists" were already followers of your cult you would not be allowed to give your cult the Belief "Silly Garb". If you have a contradiction in your cult and someone catches it then you must discard both contradicting cards as a penalty. If, however, you can get away with it without anybody noticing, then good for you!

You may use a contradiction against an opponent. For example if an opponent has the card "Squeaky Clean Record" and you play "Criminal Record" on them – because they contradict each other, both cards are discarded.

Winning the Game

As soon as a player has a predetermined number of points (10 Points for 2-4 players, 8 points for 5-6 players) this signals the end of the game. If this happens during the Cultivation Phase, continue cultivating all Followers in the Follower pool; if this happens during Player Turns, allow every other player to have a turn (but do not begin a new Cultivation Phase). After this, whoever has the most points wins! In case of a tie, the first player to reach top score is the winner.

Game Variants

Mulligans

If players feel their initial hand is unfair, they may discard and redraw.

Follower Shuffle

Rather than adding Followers to the Follower Pool at the end of players' turns, at the beginning of the game (and each time the game deck is reshuffled) add some (10), most (20), or all of the Followers into the deck. Keep your pile of unused Followers to the side of the table. Whenever a player would draw a Follower card from the top of the deck, he instead puts it into the Follower Pool (and then draws the next card). The Cultivation Phase begins in the normal way, when the number of Followers in the Pool equals or exceeds the number of players.

Cultivation Card Fury

Draw more cards during Cultivation! Each player who DOESN'T win the Follower draws a card. Do this for each Follower that is cultivated. If playing with Follower Shuffle, put any Followers drawn into the Follower pile to the side (do not add them into the Follower Pool). At the end of the Cultivation Rounds, any players with more than 5 cards in his hand must discard to bring it back down to 5.

Play Till You Can't

Rather than ending the game in the normal way, you may play with a portion of the Follower Cards (for example, 15 or 20) and play until the Follower pile has been exhausted and then determine the winner. Or heck - use all of them and just play until the Followers are all used up!



Temples and Trouble Expansion

The Temples and Trouble expansion includes some new types of cards with special rules.

- **Temples:** The deck contains six special Temple cards. These are played like Asset cards, however they cannot be targeted as Assets, and you may not play Asset Modifiers on them. Furthermore, each cult is limited to owning only a single Temple. Temples also have the "Dedicated Follower" symbol, indicating that they are worth a bonus point if in the cult with the matching Leader.
- **Interruptions:** Interruptions are a special type of Action card. These may be played either on your own turn as a normal Action card, or on an opponent's turn interrupting them as they attempt to play a card.



Fanatic Followers Expansion

The Fanatic Followers expansion adds some new twists to the interests of Followers.

- **Double Attraction:** Some followers are doubly attracted to certain cult ideals. A "x2" will appear on these cards next to a cult type symbol – these will each give a +2 attraction to these Followers.
- **Repulsion:** Some Followers find certain ideas repulsive. A "-1" will appear on the cards indicating the cult type symbol they dislike. These will each give a -1 attraction to these Followers.

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