

## **Living Crusade Module Creation Guidelines**

Living Crusade uses the d20 Fading Suns Manual and 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition VP System (with any recent modifications as posted to the website) as created by Holistic Design. The first system falls under the d20 Open Gaming License as produced by Wizards of the Coast. The second falls under the system as created by Holistic Design. Module creation serves as a valuable contribution to the Living Crusade campaign.

We want as many modules as we can get, large or small-complex or simple. Obviously we've got to set certain minimum standards for the question of points. A module should have at least 2000 words long to count in terms for 'contribution' purposes. Thus, to maximize interest while ensuring the integrity of the campaign, I have produced these guidelines.

### **Step 1: Create a concept.**

Email me your basic ideas for a module. I'm very open and flexible, but we shall all avoid much headache by coordinating our efforts from the onset. My email is [goldkngt55@aintitcoolmail.com](mailto:goldkngt55@aintitcoolmail.com). I check it daily and will get back to you rather quickly. The concept should include interest on a wide variety of themes if possible, including; intrigue, social interplay, some combat, and some moral challenges. Adding a dash of espionage and conspiracy never hurts either.

### **Step 2: Write the Encounters.**

A tried-and-true formula consists of six standard encounters: two combats, a social interactive, a puzzle, and a negotiation. These encounters must all fit within a standard four-hour time slot. I've played in enough convention events to know that by and large this formula works, with a few exceptions.

Because the number of modules that we can produce is so low, I want to make their quality is as high as possible. When writing a Living Crusade module, they must accommodate for a wide variety of potential characters, levels in skills of players, and level of skills of GM's. To accommodate for this, most modules have something called tiers. The Living Crusade campaign will also use tiers.

#### **D20**

Tier: 1: 18-24 Levels

Tier: 2: 25-36 Levels

Tier: 3: 36-42 Levels

#### **VP**

Tier 1: Starting Characters

Tier 2: Moderate Powered Characters

Tier 3: Advanced Characters

[Note: If this part intimidates you; don't worry about it. "The Lone Watch Tower" does not include these features either. This is merely a direction we eventually plan to go.

Given the rate of advancement for the life span of a module (two years) and the maximum possible slots available, we shouldn't need to accommodate for more tiers than that for at least this year.

Now that I have addressed the things that work well, let me address some of the things I'd like to do differently. First, as an author, you have two different choices when constructing your module. You can make it linear, herding the characters from encounter to encounter like sheep, or you can make it in a matrix style, where their actions determine which type of encounter they're going to go to next. Linear modules don't take as much skill to write, but they're also a lot less fun to play. Living Crusade places the player characters paramount in the world around them. The direction the metaplot takes, as well as the circumstances of the module, should depend on their actions, not the way we want them to go. Module writers are thus HIGHLY encouraged to make matrix-style modules instead of linear ones.

Second, I want to address the level of difficulty/lethality. Certain campaigns have lost my interest entirely. I'm not going to mention which ones, but in the name of creating a gritty sense of realism, modules in these campaigns often pit the characters against odds they have absolutely no chance of overcoming. Indeed, I have seen conversations on mailing lists where the people running them often feel they haven't accomplished something unless they kill off a few characters with each run of the module.

I do not want this in Living Crusade. You should have lethality and players should feel challenged, but do not put them in circumstances from which they do not have a legitimate recourse of escape. Avoid having *deus ex machina* NPC's come down from on high to rescue them, unless it is absolutely necessary.

That being said, the Fading Suns universe does have dire and far-reaching consequences. Almost no one can survive very long without a complex network of social ties. The character's actions determine the effect that the overall campaign has upon their faction.

### **Step 3: Include After Effects on Metaplot**

Once a module has debuted, the effects to the metaplot (i.e., the Universe of the Fading Suns in Living Crusade) will appear on the Living Crusade within six months. This gives the module time to receive play in many venues before the effects show up. Thus, when constructing your module, include at the end at least five different effects that the campaign will have upon the larger campaign.

For example: We'll take *War in the Heavens: Hegemony* by Holistic Design as an example. The effects that could occur as a result of that module might have included: (WARNING: Spoilers if you haven't played or read said module)

\*The Empire and the Vau have much more hostile relations if the characters kill large amounts of the Vau in their escape.

\*The Imperial Eye gains a much greater understanding of what the Vau are up to, or any other faction that the characters decide to brief about the whole thing.

\*Conflict between any church factions that might have felt offended by the character's actions, or threatened by tales they spread of the new splinter sect that worships the Pancreator to be found in the Vau regime.

All of the above depended upon a wide variety of things the characters could have done. The possibilities in a roleplaying game have no end, but to make it easier to tally, I'm including a suggested method here, though until a more official mechanism for the metaplot exists, this will simply serve as a guideline.

To the GM:

On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel the following factions came out as a result of this module, 1 being poorly, and 10 being strongly.

1. The Hegemony [1-10]
2. The Emperor [1-10]
3. The Imperial Eye [1-10]
4. The Charioteers [1-10]
5. The Orthodoxy [1-10]
6. \_\_\_\_\_ [1-10]

Which factions did the character's reveal their knowledge to?

1. The Imperial Eye
2. The Orthodoxy
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments or Other Items that occurred that might have a significant effect upon the rest of the universe that occurred in the module?

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#### **Step 4** Treasure and Experience

To keep the economy from flooding with too many artifacts of power, firebirds and the like, I'm putting a temporary cap of 8000 firebirds per module. Essentially, that means that whatever treasure the characters walk away with should not exceed 8000 firebirds. If you're intent on giving them an artifact of power, such as a philosopher's stone, email me and I'll attempt to put a value of some sort on it.

Experience should be sufficient to allow for the following level increases if they do everything right:

Level:

3-5 Once per two modules

6-8 Once per three modules

9-12 Once per four modules.

Finally, to those of you interested in writing these modules, I'd just like to extend my thanks. This can't happen without support, time and effort from others. With your help, we can make this campaign something rather spectacular.