**Romans**

The Romans believed in lots of gods. There were gods for just about everything. The Romans even took on many of the gods of the people they conquered. They especially liked the [Greek gods](https://www.ducksters.com/history/ancient_greek_mythology.php). Many Romans had a shrine in their house to worship their personal household god.   
  
**Roman Gods**   
  
The Romans adopted much of Greek Mythology into their own. They took most all of the Greek gods, gave them Roman names, and then called them their own. Here are a few of major Roman gods that came from the Greeks:

* **Jupiter** - Came from the Greek god Zeus. Jupiter was the king of the gods and god of thunder and lighting. He was the Patron God of Rome.
* **Juno**- Juno was the equivalent of the Greek goddess Hera. Juno was Jupiter's wife and queen of the gods. Juno was considered the protector of Rome.
* **Mars** - Mars came from the Greek god Ares. Mars was the god of war and Jupiter and Juno's son.
* **Mercury** - Mercury was the equivalent of the Greek god Hermes. He was the god of trade.
* **Neptune** - Neptune came from the Greek god Poseidon. He was the god of the sea and brother to Jupiter. He also was the patron of horses. Neptune's weapon was a great trident.
* **Venus** - Venus was the equivalent of the Greek goddess Aphrodite. She was the god of love and beauty.
* **Apollo** - Apollo was taken directly from Greek god Apollo. He was the god of music, poetry, and archery. His twin sister was Diana.
* **Diana** - Diana was taken from the Greek goddess Artemis. She was goddess of the hunt, archery, and animals. Her symbols included the moon, the snake, and the bow and arrow.
* **Minerva** - Minerva comes from the Greek goddess Athena. She was the goddess of wisdom.
* **Ceres** - Ceres was the equivalent of the Greek goddess Demeter. She was goddess of agriculture and the seasons. It's from the name Ceres that we get the name for cereal.
* **Vulcan** - Vulcan comes from the Greek god Hephaestus. He was the blacksmith for the rest of the gods and was god of fire. The word volcano comes from the name Vulcan.
* **Bacchus** - Bacchus comes from the Greek god Dionysus. He was god of wine and the theatre. He was the youngest of the major gods and the only one born to a mortal.

**Romulus and Remus**   
  
Early Roman mythology tells the story of how Rome was founded by two twin gods named Romulus and Remus. Romulus and Remus both wished to found a new city. Romulus wanted to found it on Palatine Hill, but Remus disagreed and wanted to found it on Aventine Hill. They had a fight and Romulus killed Remus. Romulus then founded the city of Rome and created the Roman legion as well as the Senate.   
  
**Imperial Cult**   
  
The Imperial Cult worshiped the Emperors of Rome. Starting with Julius Caesar, who ended the Roman Republic and became dictator, the emperors of Rome were deified, or turned into god status. This was a way for the leaders of Rome to become even more powerful. Most of the emperors were made into gods except for certain bad ones like Nero and Tiberius. This practice lasted up until Emperor Constantine who converted to Christianity.   
  
**Christianity**   
  
Since the Romans had many gods and the Christians believed in just one true God, Christians were often persecuted by Rome. At one point they were told to either worship and sacrifice to the Roman gods or they would be killed. Many were killed in the arenas by lions. When Emperor Constantine came into power he converted to Christianity and the persecution stopped.   
  
**Temples**   
  
There were many temples in Rome and throughout the Roman Empire. They were generally built for a single god and had a statue of the god at the center. The most important temple in Ancient Rome was the Temple of Jupiter located on Capitoline Hill. The Pantheon was a temple to all the Roman gods. There were also temples built to the Emperors such as Julius Caesar and Augustus. 

**Festivals**   
  
The Romans held festivals and holidays to celebrate their gods. They would often have games and a large feast to celebrate. Some important festivals that the Romans celebrated were Lupercalia, Saturnalia, and the Consualia.