

## Rome: Republic to Empire

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Explain the founding myths of Rome.
- Identify Cincinnatus, Julius Caesar, Cicero, and Augustus.
- Describe the government of the Roman Republic, the checks on it, and its use of dictators.
- Express a reasoned opinion on whether the United States should adopt an amendment to grant the president greater powers in an emergency.

### PREPARATION

**Handout 11A: Timeline of Ancient Rome**—1 per student

**Handout 11B: Map of the Roman Empire**—1 per student

**Handout 11C: Rome: Republic to Empire**—1 per student

**Handout 11D: Emergency Powers**—1 per student

### Overview

This lesson traces the history of Rome from its founding myths through its kings, the republic, and the end of the republic. First, students hold a discussion on what a dictator is. Then they read and discuss an article on the beginning of Rome, the Roman Republic, and its transformation into an empire. Finally, in small groups, students role play members of a congressional committee deciding on whether the U.S. Constitution should be amended to give the president greater powers in an emergency.

### STANDARDS ADDRESSED

**California History–Social Science Standard 6.7: Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the development of Rome.**

(1) Identify the location and describe the rise of the Roman Republic, including the importance of such mythical and historical figures as Aeneas, Romulus and Remus, Cincinnatus, Julius Caesar, and Cicero. (2) Describe the government of the Roman Republic and its significance (e.g., written constitution and tripartite government, checks and balances, civic duty).

(4) Discuss the influence of Julius Caesar and Augustus in Rome's transition from republic to empire.

**National World History Standard 9: Understand how major religious and large-scale empires arose in the Mediterranean Basin, China, and India from 500 BCE to 300 CE.** (1) Understands the origins and social framework of Roman society (e.g., . . . how legends of the founding of Rome describe ancient Rome and reflect the beliefs and values of its citizens . . .). (2) Understands shifts in the political and social framework of Roman society (e.g., political and social institutions of the Roman Republic and reasons for its transformation from Republic to Empire; how values changed from the early Republic to the last years of the Empire as reflected through the lives of such Romans as Cincinnatus, . . . Julius Caesar . . .).

## Vocabulary

dictator	emperor	Italian Peninsula
patricians	plebeians	republic
Tiber River	Trojans	

## Procedure

### A. Focus Discussion

1. Hold a brief discussion on dictatorship by asking students the following questions:
  - What is a dictator?
  - What powers does a dictator have?
  - What is the problem with having a dictator?

2. Tell students that they are going to read about ancient Rome, a society that sometimes installed a dictator for a short time to solve problems.

### B. Reading and Discussion—Rome: Republic to Empire

1. Distribute **Handout 11A: Timeline of Ancient Rome**. Tell students that this timeline gives an overview of the period they will be studying. Also distribute **Handout 11B: Map of the Roman Empire**. Tell students that this is a map of the Roman Empire in about A.D. 14. Ask them to keep these handouts for reference during the unit on Rome. Give students the following background:

Rome began as a city-state on the Italian Peninsula. It gradually grew from a city-state into a great empire. For hundreds of years, Rome was a republic, a form of democracy. In time, however, it changed to be ruled by an emperor.

2. Distribute **Handout 11C: Rome: Republic to Empire**. Ask students to look for the following as they read:
  - Important people—historical and mythical—in the history of Rome.
  - How Rome changed from a republic to an empire.
3. When students finish reading, hold a discussion on Rome. Questions to raise:
  - What are the two myths about the beginning of Rome? If you were a Roman, which myth would you prefer? Why?
  - How did the Roman Republic check the power of its leaders? Why do you think it checked their power?
  - Why did the Roman Republic sometimes resort to dictators? Who did the Romans hold up as the perfect dictator? Why?
  - How did the Roman Republic end? Who do you think were the most important Romans at the end of the republic? Why?

### C. Small-Group Activity—Emergency Powers

1. Tell students that the United States is a republic. Explain that voters elect Congress and the president. The Congress passes laws and the president can sign them or veto them. Explain that in an emergency, the president has great power. For example, the president is

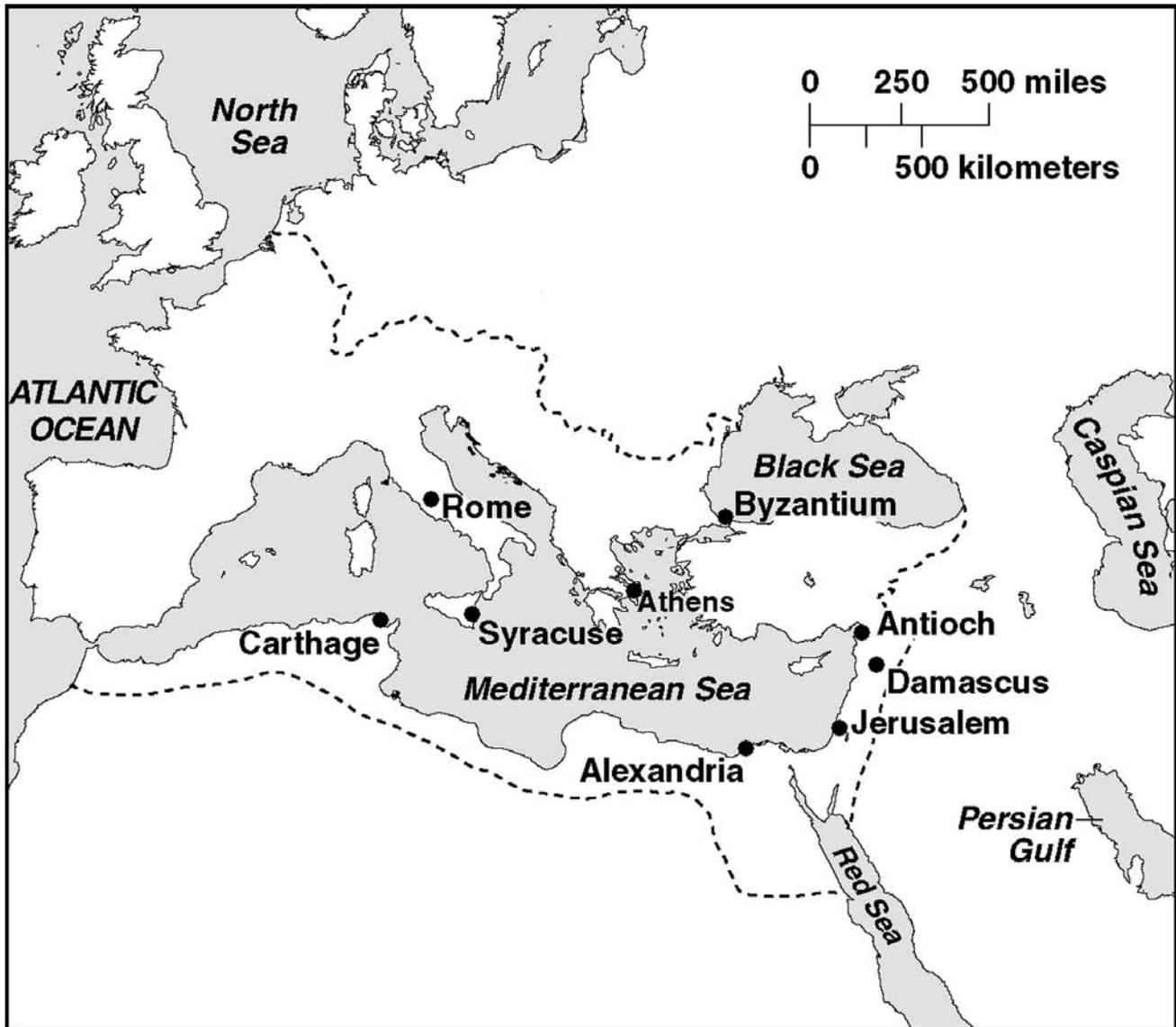
the commander in chief of the armed forces and if the United States were attacked, the president could order a response.

2. Tell students that they are going to get a chance to role play members of Congress who decide whether to give the president new powers in an emergency.
3. Divide the class into groups of five or six students. Distribute to each student **Handout 11D: Emergency Powers**. Review the instructions on the handout and answer any questions students may have.
4. Give students time to complete the activity. Before they finish, go to each group, ask how they decided, and make sure they have written down their three reasons.
5. When they are done, ask which groups decided to recommend the amendment. Ask them to give their reasons to the class. Ask which groups decided not to recommend the amendment. Ask them to give their reasons to the class. Hold a discussion by asking:
  - Why do we have the First Amendment? What good does free speech do?
  - What problems might the new amendment solve?
  - What dangers might the new amendment bring?

## Timeline of Ancient Rome

Founding of Rome	c. 750 B.C.
Kingdom of Rome	c. 750–509
Roman Republic began	509
Cincinnatus dictator	458
Cincinnatus dictator again	439
Sulla dictator	81–80
Cicero consul	63
First Triumvirate	60
Caesar crossed Rubicon	49
Caesar dictator	45–44
Murder of Caesar	44
Second Triumvirate	43
Cicero killed	43
Brutus and Cassius killed	42
Battle of Actium	31
Death of Antony and Cleopatra	30
Reign of Augustus	27 B.C.–A.D. 14
Reign of Tiberius	A.D. 14–37
Reign of Nero	54–68
Rome burned	64
Great Temple of Jerusalem destroyed	70
Reign of Hadrian	117–138
Jewish rebellion	132–135
Reign of Decius	249–251
Reign of Gallienus	253–268
Christianity made a legal religion	260
Reign of Diocletian	284–305
Great Persecution of Christians began	303
Reign of Constantine	306–337
Freedom of religion compromise	313
Reign of Theodosius	379–395
Christianity made the religion of Rome	395
Collapse of Western Roman Empire	476

# Map of the Roman Empire, c. A.D. 14



The dotted line marks the boundary of the empire as of A.D. 14.

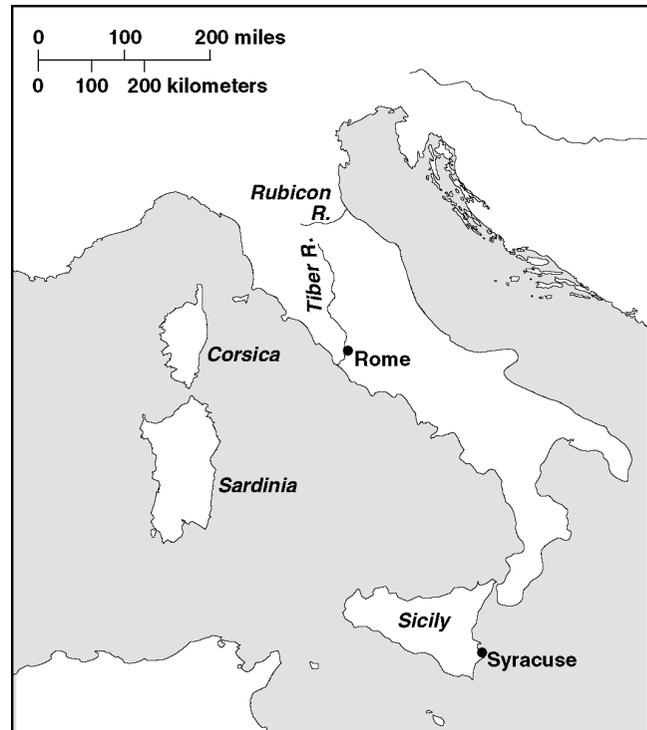
## Rome: Republic to Empire

Rome is located on the Tiber River halfway down the Italian Peninsula. It began as a city-state, first ruled by kings. Then for about 500 years, it was a republic, a government with elected leaders. For another 500 years, emperors ruled it. Rome grew to be the greatest empire in the ancient world.

Rome had two myths of how it began. In one myth, twin babies, Romulus and Remus, were put on a raft on the Tiber to die. But the raft drifted ashore. A mother wolf found and fed the boys. When they grew up, they built a city. But the two argued, and Romulus killed Remus. Romulus ruled the city. It was named Rome in his honor.

### Pronunciation Key

Aeneas (i NEE us)  
Caesar (SEE zer)  
Cincinnatus (sin suh NAT us)  
consuls (CON sul)  
patricians (puh TRISH uns)  
plebeians (pli BEE uns)  
Pompey (POM pee)  
Remus (REE mus)  
Romulus (ROM yuh lus)  
Tiber (TIE bur)  
Triumvirate (try UM vir it)



The Roman Empire began on the Tiber River as a city-state named Rome.

In the other myth, Aeneas founded Rome. Aeneas was a Trojan. When the ancient Greeks defeated the Trojans, Aeneas sailed off. His voyage took him many places, and he had many adventures. He finally landed on the Italian Peninsula and founded Rome. This myth showed that the Romans came from one of the great peoples of the ancient world, the Trojans.

When it began about 750 B.C., Rome was ruled by kings. A council of nobles, called the Senate, advised the kings. In 509 B.C., the Romans threw out their last king.

To replace the king, a citizen assembly elected two men as consuls. They would govern together for one year. Both consuls had to agree for the government to act. After their time in office, the consuls would become members of the Senate. On the surface, the consuls seemed to hold more power than senators. But they held office for only a year. Senators served for life.

Rome had two classes, the patricians and the plebeians. The patricians were wealthy, landowning nobles. The plebeians were the common people. At first, the consuls were always patricians. Later, however, at least one consul had to come from the plebeian class. The plebeians had their own citizen assemblies. One was for questions of war. Another passed laws and sat as a court.

The system of government had many checks and balances. The consuls assumed the role of kings. But both had to agree to get anything done. The Senate represented the rich. The citizen assemblies represented the plebeians. No one person or group held all the power.

### **Dictatorship**

Romans believed in limiting the power of their leaders. The Romans, however, came up with a way to sidestep these checks for short periods. During a crisis,

when strong leadership was needed, the Senate could vote to grant total power to one man. Romans called this person a "dictator."

During the first 300 years of the republic, dictators came to power when Rome faced an invasion or other danger. The dictatorship lasted only six months or even less if the crisis passed. If a dictator refused to step down, he could be forced out.

The Roman dictator's word was law. He could even order executions without a trial. For centuries, Roman dictators served when duty called and gave up power when their terms ended.

Romans held up Cincinnatus as the ideal dictator. According to legend, Cincinnatus was working in the fields when the Senate named him dictator in 458. He left his farm, led the Roman army to defeat invaders, and returned to his farm. He was named dictator again about 20 years later. Again, he served briefly and returned home.

But in 81 B.C., a general named Cornelius Sulla seized control of Rome. Sulla was not like other dictators. He bypassed the Senate, which was filled with his enemies. He persuaded the citizens' assembly to make him a permanent dictator. Sulla then banished or killed hundreds of his opponents.

After more than two years of rule, Sulla resigned and died soon after. For the next 30 years, the Roman Republic stumbled along. A slave named Spartacus led a massive revolt that almost brought down the republic. New feuds and factions emerged.

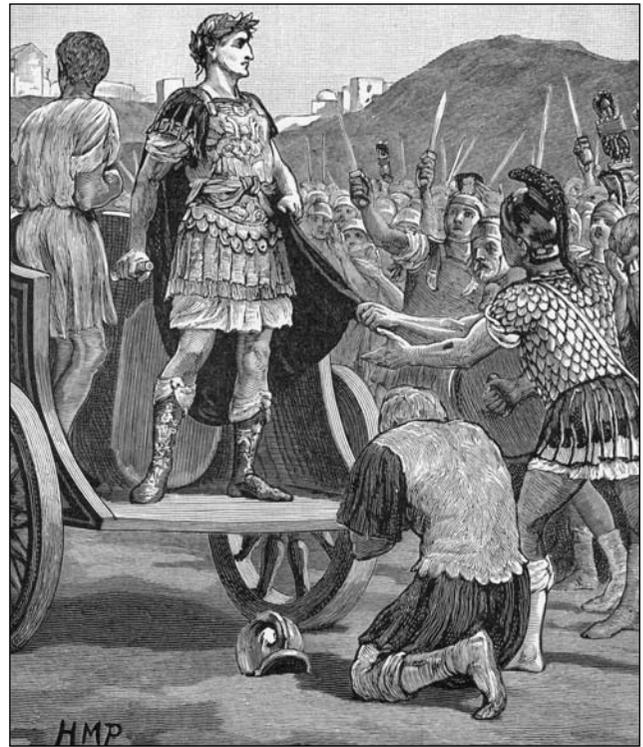
The greatest defender of the republic was Cicero. He was born outside Rome, and he was not a patrician. He studied law and made a name for himself as a great speaker. Despite his background, he was made a member of the Senate and consul in 63. He worked hard to hold the republic together.

### **The Dictatorship of Julius Caesar**

But factions in the Senate had paralyzed the Roman government. The annual consul election turned into a contest of who could bribe the most voters. Street riots broke out.

To restore order, the assembly elected General Gnaeus Pompey as sole consul for a year. Informally, Pompey shared power with two other powerful generals—Julius Caesar and Marcus Crassus.

Crassus was the general who had defeated Spartacus. Caesar was the governor and military conqueror of Gaul (France). These three men were known as the First Triumvirate (group of three).



Although Julius Caesar was known for his military victories, he also passed laws to help the poor.

Caesar used his power to put supporters like General Marc Antony into key positions. Caesar's enemies in Rome spread rumors that he planned to take power. In 49 B.C., Caesar massed his army at the border between Gaul and Italy. It looked as if Caesar was about to invade Rome. The consul Marcellus named Pompey the defender of the city.

The Senate demanded that Caesar give up his post. Caesar answered by leading his army across the Rubicon River into Italy. This "crossing of the Rubicon" was an act of war. It was against the law for a Roman general to lead an army outside the province he

governed. Pompey, Cicero, and most of the senators fled from Rome.

Unlike Sulla, Caesar did not butcher his opponents. He tried to form alliances with them, and he had himself elected consul. Caesar then took his army in pursuit of Pompey and defeated him in Africa. After staying for some time with Cleopatra, the ruler of Egypt, Caesar returned to Rome.

By 45 B.C., Caesar had defeated all the troops loyal to Pompey. The Senate acclaimed him "Liberator" and made him dictator for 10 years. Caesar handed bonuses to his troops, gave money to every citizen, and pardoned his enemies.

During his rule, Caesar made many reforms such as a new calendar and relief for debtors. In return, the Roman people heaped honors on him. One of the Roman months was renamed Julius, our July. Statues of Caesar went up in the city. His image appeared on coins. Then, in February 44 B.C., Caesar was made dictator for life.

It's not clear whether Caesar intended to become king.

According to tradition, Marc Antony publicly offered a king's crown to Caesar, who refused it three times. As king, Caesar would no longer need the Senate to stay in power. But he was killed only a

few days later. Caesar's death plunged Rome into 17 years of civil war.

The warfare finally ended when Octavian, Caesar's adopted son, became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. Octavian kept the forms of the republic. The Senate met. Consuls were elected. But the emperor held all the power. The republic was dead, and dictatorship had won.

### For Discussion

1. What are the two myths about the beginning of Rome? If you were a Roman, which myth would you prefer? Why?
2. How did the Roman Republic check the power of its leaders? Why do you think it checked their power?
3. Why did the Roman Republic sometimes resort to dictators? Who did the Romans hold up as the perfect dictator? Why?
4. How did the Roman Republic end? Who do you think were the most important Romans at the end of the republic? Why?

## Emergency Powers

In ancient Rome, the Roman Senate could grant a consul the powers of a dictator in an emergency.

In the United States, the president has great power to deal with an emergency. But should the U.S. president have even greater power in such a situation?

Imagine that a group of U.S. senators has proposed this constitutional amendment:

In an emergency, the president may have this special power: After declaring an emergency, the president may outlaw anyone from making critical comments about the president or U.S. government. This ban may last up to six months. If this power goes into effect, a person who writes or speaks anything critical about the U.S. government may be arrested and put on trial. If convicted of making such a statement, the person may be sentenced to serve up to one year in jail.

This amendment would create a major exception to the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment. The First Amendment protects the freedom of speech of every person.

Imagine that your group is a committee in Congress. Your committee's job is to decide whether or not to recommend this amendment.

In your group, do the following.

1. Discuss the amendment.

What might be good about having this amendment?

What might go wrong if we had this amendment?

2. Decide either to recommend passing the amendment or to recommend not passing the amendment.
3. Write down three reasons for your decision.
4. Be prepared to report your decision and your reasons for it to the rest of the class.

## Augustus: The Leader

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Describe the influence of Augustus in Rome's transition from republic to empire.
- Identify Cicero and describe his importance.
- Evaluate and make a presentation to the class on one of the following figures from ancient history: Augustus, Cicero, Aristotle, Plato, Pericles, Confucius, Lao Zi, Ramses, or Hatshepsut.

### PREPARATION

**Handout 12A: Augustus: The Leader**—1 per student

**Handout 12B: What Makes a Good Leader?**—1 per student

For the activity, choose five of the following nine historical figures that you want students to interview and make enough copies of the appropriate handouts for students in the group: Augustus (Handout 12A), Cicero (Handout 12A), Aristotle (Handout 10B), Plato (Handout 10A), Pericles (Handout 8C), Confucius (Handout 5A), Lao Zi (Handout 5B), Ramses (Handout 3A), Hatshepsut (Handout 3A). Consider giving students extra time to research for the activity by going as a class to the school library or using computers to access the Internet.

### Overview

This lesson examines the leadership of Augustus and the period when Rome made its transition from republic to empire. First, students hold a discussion on what makes a good leader. Then they read and discuss an article on Augustus. Finally, in small groups, students produce "T.V. interviews" of important leaders from ancient history.

### STANDARDS ADDRESSED

**California History–Social Science Standard 6.7: Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the development of Rome.** (1) Identify the . . . importance of such . . . historical figures as . . . Cicero. (4) Discuss the influence of . . . Augustus in Rome's transition from republic to empire.

**National World History Standard 9: Understand how major religious and large-scale empires arose in the Mediterranean Basin, China, and India from 500 BCE to 300 CE.** (2) Understands shifts in the political and social framework of Roman society (e.g., political and social institutions of the Roman Republic and reasons for its transformation from Republic to Empire; how values changed from the early Republic to the last years of the Empire as reflected through the lives of such Romans as . . . Cicero, . . . Augustus . . .).

## Vocabulary

admiral

dilemma

heir

## Procedure

### A. Focus Discussion

1. Hold a brief discussion by asking students: What makes a good leader?
2. Tell students that they are going to read about one of ancient Rome's greatest leaders, Octavian, also known as Augustus Caesar, who led Rome during its transition from republic to empire.

### B. Reading and Discussion—Augustus: The Leader

1. Give students the following background:

The murder of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. brought a great power struggle to Rome. Some wanted a return to the republic. Others, such as Marc Antony and Octavian, wanted to succeed Julius Caesar as dictator for life. After a bitter struggle, Octavian emerged as the victor and became emperor of Rome.

2. Distribute **12A: Augustus: The Leader**. Ask students to look for the following as they read:

- How Augustus managed to gain total power as emperor.
- The techniques he used to hold on to power.

3. When students finish reading, hold a discussion on the reading. Questions to raise:

- How did Augustus get to be the emperor? What techniques did he use to hold on to power?
- In what ways was he good for Rome? In what ways was he bad for Rome? Why?
- Who was Cicero? Why do you think he was important?

### C. Small-Group Activity—What Makes a Good Leader?

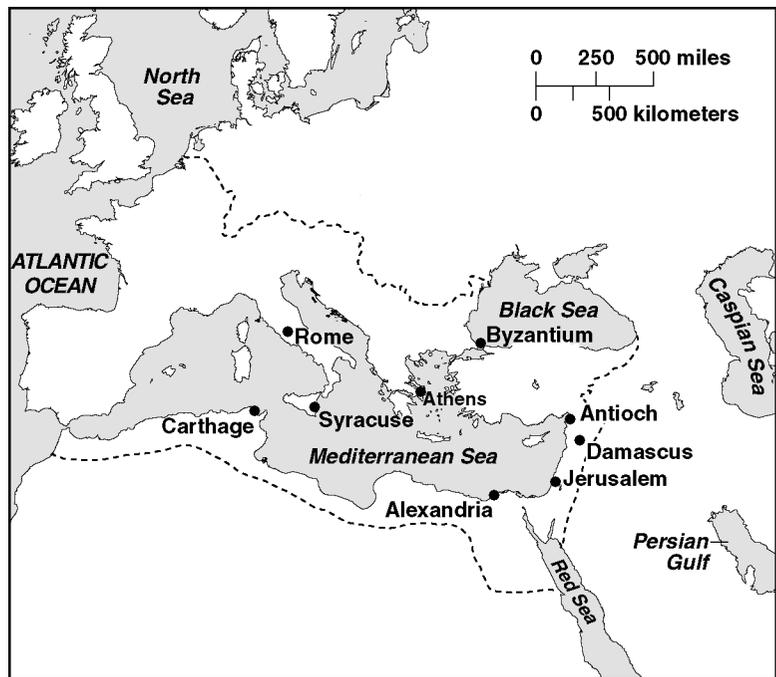
1. Explain that students are going to get to interview famous people from the past about leadership. Distribute **Handout 12B: What Makes a Good Leader?** Divide the class into five groups. Review the instructions. Assign each group one of five historical figures from the following group and distribute to each group the appropriate handout: Augustus (Handout 12A), Cicero (Handout 12A), Aristotle (Handout 10B), Plato (Handout 10A), Pericles (Handout 8C), Confucius (Handout 5A), Lao Zi (Handout 5B), Ramses (Handout 3A), Hatshepsut (Handout 3A). (If you choose to assign Augustus and Cicero, students already have **Handout 12A**.)
2. Give students time to prepare, practice, and do extra research (if you have decided on this option). Tell students how much time they will have for the show. We recommend 7–12 minutes. When they practice, tell students to evaluate and coach each other on the following:
  - Can you understand what the person is saying? (Articulation and meaning.)
  - Is the person speaking loud enough? Can you hear the person 20 feet away?
  - Does the person sound interested in the topic?
3. Have students give their presentations. After each presentation, debrief by asking these questions:
  - Why was this person important in history?
  - What was most interesting about the person?
  - Is there anything more you would like to know about the person?

## Augustus: The Leader

The greatest emperor of the Roman Empire was Gaius Octavius, or Octavian. As emperor for nearly half a century, the Senate gave him the name "Augustus," meaning "divine" or "grand."

Octavian was born into a noble Roman family in 63 B.C. His father was a senator in the Roman Republic. His mother was the niece of the great military leader Julius Caesar. Childless, Caesar adopted Octavian in his will, making him Caesar's heir.

In 44 B.C., two Roman politicians, Brutus and Cassius, led a group that killed Julius Caesar. Octavian, then age 19, decided to claim his rights under Caesar's will. Octavian began calling himself Gaius Julius Caesar. He set out on a bloody 13-year effort to



Roman Empire at the time of Augustus, 27 B.C.–A.D. 14.

become the sole ruler of the Roman Empire.

First, he had to wipe out the murderers of Julius Caesar. Octavian joined with two other leaders, Lepidus and Marc Antony. Antony had been a favorite of Julius Caesar. He had delivered a stirring speech at Caesar's funeral. Soon afterward, the Senate proclaimed Julius Caesar a god. Nothing could have pleased Octavian more. That made him the son of a god.

Brutus and Cassius were at large and a threat to Octavian. The armies of Octavian, Lepidus, and Antony trapped them near Greece. They defeated them in battle in 42

### Pronunciation Key

Actium (ACT ee um)  
Agrippa (uh GRIP uh)  
Horace (HOR us)  
Lepidus (LEP i dus)  
Octavian (ock TAY vee un)  
Praetorian (PREE tor ee un)  
principate (prin suh PATE)  
Tiberius (tie BEER ee us)

## MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO (C. 106–43 B.C.)

Cicero was the greatest defender of the Roman Republic in its dying days. He was an outstanding speaker and writer and an important thinker. Over the centuries, his ideas have influenced many people, including the founders of the United States. John Adams, the second U.S. president, wrote that: "All the ages of the world have not produced a greater statesman and philosopher combined."

Cicero believed in the rule of law. He thought that no one person or group should hold too much power. He worried about the power of the army. He often said: "Cedant arma togae." In Latin, this meant, "Let the soldier obey the civilian."

He was born in 106 B.C. in a wealthy, but not noble, family. He studied law and went to Greece to study philosophy. In Greece, he learned how to speak and argue a point well. He returned to Rome and gained fame as a lawyer. He was elected to every important Roman office. In 63 B.C., he was elected consul. He was the first consul in 30 years whose relatives had never held public office.

As consul, he uncovered a plot to overthrow the Roman Republic. The Senate briefly made him a dictator to put down the plot. As dictator, Cicero ordered a few of the conspirators executed without a trial. Cicero believed he had saved the republic.

*(Continued on next page)*

B.C. Octavian did not take part in the fighting. Some say he was ill, but others claim that he hid in a nearby marsh in fear of his life. Following the battle, Octavian ordered the head of Brutus sent back to Rome for public display.

Octavian, Lepidus, and Antony had drawn up lists of political enemies and were tracking them down. The bloodbath killed about 300 senators, including the famous speaker Cicero. Another 2,000 nobles were also murdered.

With Caesar avenged, Octavian claimed he was the rightful leader of the Roman Empire. Antony had assumed that he would succeed Caesar. He had long made fun of the youthful Octavian. A year before, Antony had pointed to Octavian in the Senate and said, "You, boy, owe everything to your name." The "boy" proved more than a match for Marc Antony.

After forcing Lepidus to retire, Octavian made peace with Marc Antony. Antony would rule the eastern part of the Roman Empire

## Marcus Tullius Cicero (c. 106–43 B.C.), continued.

But the executions brought him new enemies. In 58 B.C., the Senate passed a law to get rid of Cicero. The law stated that no one could live within 500 miles of the Italian Peninsula if the person had executed a Roman without a trial. Cicero fled Rome, and the government took all his property. The next year, however, Roman General Pompey recalled him and gave him back his property.

When Julius Caesar led his army into Rome, Cicero again fled the city. Caesar persuaded him to return, however, by promising that Cicero would not be harmed. Cicero hoped that Caesar would restore the republic. Instead, Caesar made himself dictator for life. Cicero spent the years of Caesar's dictatorship writing. He was deeply opposed to Caesar, but saw little he could do. Then in 44 B.C., Caesar was murdered.

Cicero quickly returned to public life as one of Rome's leading figures. He viewed Marc Antony, a close friend of Caesar, as the main opponent of the republic. Antony gave a speech attacking Cicero for not attending the Senate on the day it proclaimed Julius Caesar a Roman god. Cicero answered back. He delivered 14 famous speeches (known as the Philippics) in the Senate. His speeches attacked Antony and defended the republic.

Antony joined Octavian and another general to form the Second Triumvirate. They hunted down the murderers of Caesar. They also made a list of other enemies to be killed. Antony added Cicero's name to the list. Cicero was tracked down and killed in 43 B.C.

from Egypt with his lover, Cleopatra. Octavian would rule the western part from Rome. For about 10 years, an uneasy peace existed between the two. Octavian used the time to plot against Antony.

Octavian had to turn the people of Rome against the popular Marc Antony. Octavian did this through

speeches, writings, and rumors. He convinced the people that Antony had betrayed Rome by giving control of the eastern empire to Cleopatra.

With the support of the Roman people, Octavian launched a war against Antony and Cleopatra. The final struggle for the empire took place at the naval battle of

Actium in 31 B.C. As before, Octavian became ill when the battle began. But he had a great admiral, Agrippa, on his side. Agrippa's leadership defeated Antony and Cleopatra's navy. As the battle turned, Anthony and Cleopatra abandoned their fighting men and fled back to Egypt. Later both took their own lives. Some ancient writers say that Octavian also murdered Cleopatra's young son, Caesarion, who she claimed was the son of Julius Caesar.

### **Augustus the Politician**

When Octavian returned to Rome, he was hailed for saving the empire. The Roman people, tired of civil war, hungered for peace. In 27 B.C., he accepted the honorary name "Augustus" from the Senate.

Augustus was ready to rule, but he faced a dilemma. He wanted to rule for life with total power. But he remembered what had happened to Julius Caesar after becoming dictator for life. Men opposed to dictators had killed him. Augustus began to rig Rome's system of government.

Augustus did not repeat Julius Caesar's mistake. He did not accept the title of "dictator for life." In fact, Augustus pretended to restore the old Roman Republic. Rather than become

dictator or king, Augustus accepted the position of consul. This position gave him great power, but only for a year. Every year the Senate had to rename him consul.

Behind the scenes, Augustus packed the Senate with his friends. He also created an army of about 300,000 men, all loyal to him. Another 5,000 soldiers made up the Praetorian Guard, his personal bodyguards. Augustus paid his soldiers well, gave them gifts, and presented them cash bonuses or land when they retired.

With most senators and the army behind him, Augustus slowly accepted more and more power. Finally, in 23 B.C., the Senate gave him lifetime power to rule. Augustus had worked a political miracle. On the surface, it looked like elected officials still ruled Rome. In reality, Augustus was the only ruler, every bit a dictator as Julius Caesar.

Augustus called his system of government the *principate*. (This came from the Latin word *princeps*, meaning "first citizen.") Even though this system was a sham, most Romans preferred it to the civil war they had just gone through.

To keep the goodwill of the people, Augustus did almost anything to glorify his name. He built and rebuilt many temples and other

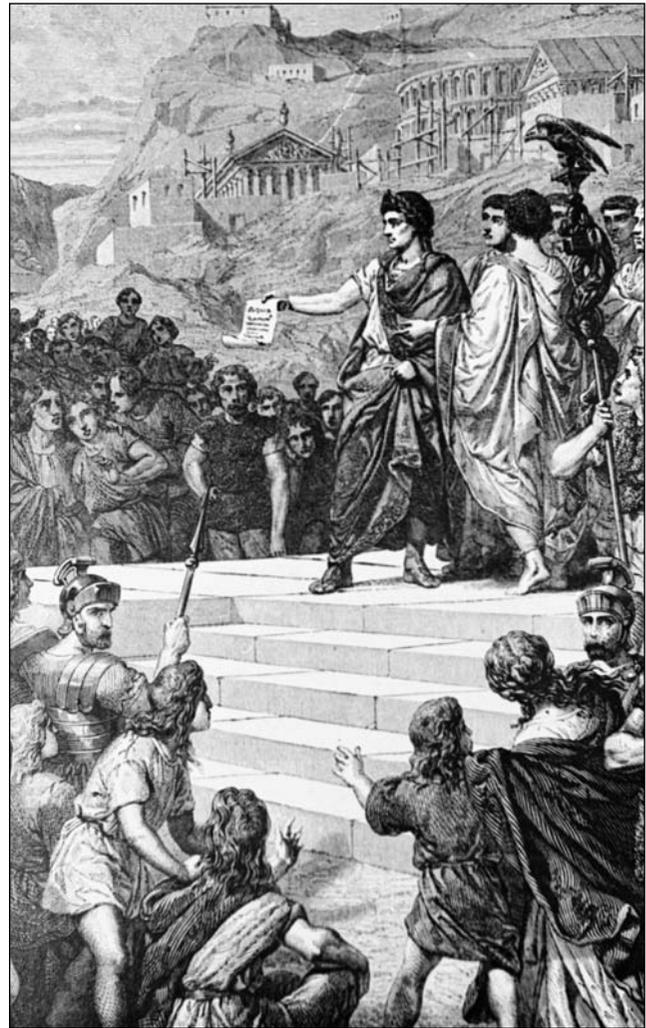
public buildings in his name. Statues and coins with his image appeared everywhere. The Roman poets Virgil, Horace, and Ovid wrote about his greatness.

### Style of Leadership

Augustus made sure the Romans saw his greatness, but he did not flaunt his power and wealth. He lived in a modest house, not a palace. He ate and dressed simply. He held public meetings open to all. He let people speak out freely if they had useful suggestions to make.

Outwardly, he was a friend of the Roman people. In fact, he was an all-powerful tyrant. He usually consulted with the Senate before proposing laws. But the Senate was full of his supporters. They made sure that Augustus got his way. Augustus also kept a system of spies and informers to spot and keep track of his enemies.

Augustus won the common people over with "bread and circuses." Out of his own pocket, he gave the common people free or low-cost food and gifts. In 5 B.C., Augustus gave money to 320,000 Romans. He held exciting gladiator contests and public events to keep people amused. Once, he paid for a mock naval battle with real warships on a man-made lake.



Augustus replaced the republic and became the first emperor of the Roman Empire.

### "Dismiss Me With Applause"

Augustus enjoyed a long reign. To Rome, he brought stable government. He rebuilt the city from one of bricks to one of marble. Arts and literature thrived. He expanded the empire, bringing more wealth to Rome. He built roads, canals, and harbors. His policies brought about the beginning of the *Pax Romana*, the Roman Peace. Throughout the Mediterranean region and much of Europe, Roman armies kept

order and Roman judges dispensed justice. Augustus led Rome to the peak of its power and glory, the so-called Augustan Age.

Augustus had a daughter, but no sons. He needed a male successor. Near the end of his life, he considered his relatives. Nearly all of them had died or been murdered. In his will, he adopted his adult stepson, Tiberius, as his heir and successor. Tiberius was a strong emperor, but less so than Augustus. Emperors following Tiberius grew weaker and more harsh. Some were monsters. None of them came close to matching Augustus.

In A.D. 14, at age 77, Augustus was on his death bed. He recited to his close friends a line that often ended Roman plays:

Since well I've played my part,  
all clap your hands

And from the stage dismiss me  
with applause.

A few days later, Augustus died. The Roman Senate declared him a god.

## For Discussion

1. How did Augustus get to be the emperor? What techniques did he use to hold on to power?
2. In what ways was he good for Rome? In what ways was he bad for Rome? Why?
3. Who was Cicero? Why do you think he was he important?

## What Makes a Good Leader?

Imagine that you produce a TV interview show called "What Makes a Good Leader?" On each show, an important person is interviewed. This week the show will interview important figures from ancient history. Your group is in charge of producing one show.

The show begins with the host saying: "Welcome to another edition of 'What Makes a Good Leader?' Today, we have with us [name of the historical person]. In case you don't know already, this person . . . [Introduce the person so that the audience will understand what the person he has done and why the person is important.] Our historical figure will be interviewed by our panel of reporters. They are . . . [Introduce their names and the newspapers or media outlets they work for.] And I am [Introduce yourself]. Welcome [name of historical figure] and welcome panel. [Name of a reporter], please ask the first question."

The show continues with the reporters and host asking questions of the guest. Depending on who the historical figure is, the questions can be about:

- What the historical figure accomplished or failed to do.
- Whether something the person did was proper.
- The person's opinions on:
  - How a ruler should act.
  - Whether women should be involved in government.
  - Whether it is important for a ruler to build monuments.
  - Whether democracy is a good form of government.
- What the person contributed to history.

The show ends with the host asking a last question: "What makes a good leader?" After the guest answers, the host thanks the guest and reporters.

Prepare for the show by doing the following:

1. Read your person's biography. Also read the section of your textbook on the time the historical figure lived. (It will give you background and may even tell more about your historical figure).

2. Find more information by:
  - (A) Going to the library. Look for books and periodicals with more information.
  - (B) Going on the Internet. Go to CRF's web site ([www.crf-usa.org](http://www.crf-usa.org)). Click on Links, CityYouth: Ancient History Links, and Augustus: The Leader. Your person is listed with links to a lot of information.
3. Think up questions that will provide interesting information and lively answers. They can be tough questions that make the guest squirm. They can be "softball" questions that the guest can answer easily. But most of all they should be questions that get interesting answers.
4. Prepare the questions and answers.
5. Decide who will play the different roles: host, guest, reporters. Everyone should have a role and every reporter should ask at least one question.
6. Practice. Keep your show within the time limit given by the teacher.

## Jews and Christians in the Empire

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Describe how the Roman Empire dealt with diverse religions.
- Explain the causes and consequences of two major conflicts Rome had with Jews.
- Identify factors that helped Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire.
- Describe and evaluate the different policies that Rome had toward the Christian religion.
- Cite instances of religious persecution in the Roman Empire.
- Prepare and deliver a persuasive speech on the importance of freedom of religion.

### PREPARATION

**Handout 13A: The Treatment of Jews in the Roman Empire**—1 per student

**Handout 13B: The Treatment of Christians in the Roman Empire**—1 per student

**Handout 13C: Freedom of Religion**—1 per student

### Overview

This two-day lesson explores the history of religious toleration and persecution in the Roman Empire.

On the first day, students discuss why religious freedom is important. Then they read and discuss an article on the treatment of Jews in the Roman Empire.

On the second day, students review what they learned the previous day. Then they read and discuss an article on the treatment of Christians in the Roman Empire. Finally, students prepare and deliver speeches to Emperor Theodocius urging him to adopt freedom of religion in the Roman Empire.

### STANDARDS ADDRESSED

**California History–Social Science Standard 6.7: Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the development of Rome.**

(5) Trace the migration of Jews around the Mediterranean region and the effects of their conflict with the Romans, including the Romans' restrictions on their right to live in Jerusalem. (7) Describe the circumstances that led to the spread of Christianity in Europe and other Roman territories.

**National World History Standard 9: Understand how major religious and large-scale empires arose in the Mediterranean Basin, China, and India from 500 BCE to 300 CE.** (4) Understands events in the rise of Christianity (e.g., . . . how Christianity spread widely in the Roman Empire . . .).

**National Civics Standard 25: Understands issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights.** (2) Understands the importance to individuals and society of such personal rights as freedom of conscience and religion.

## Vocabulary

Asia Minor  
pagan

crucify  
raze

Latin  
scapegoat

## Procedure

### A. Focus Discussion

1. Remind students that in fifth grade they studied U.S. history and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Tell them that, among other things, the First Amendment protects freedom of religion. It compels the government to stay out of religion, and it protects people's right to practice the religion of their choice. Hold a brief discussion by asking students: Why do you think freedom of religion is important?
2. Tell students that they are going to learn about the challenges Rome faced in creating an empire with people of many different religions.

### B. Reading and Discussion—The Treatment of Jews in the Roman Empire

1. Give students the following background:  
Roman legions conquered all the land and peoples around the Mediterranean. To make their empire work, they had to incorporate these people into the empire. One problem was that the diverse peoples worshiped many different gods.
2. Tell students that this first reading focuses on how the Romans dealt with most religions and the special challenge they faced with the Jews. Distribute **Handout 13A: The Treatment of Jews in the Roman Empire**. Ask students to look for the following as they read:
  - How Romans dealt with most religions of other people.
  - How they dealt with the special challenge posed by the Jews.
3. When students finish reading, hold a discussion on the reading. Questions to raise:
  - What methods did Rome use to win over the diverse people in its empire? How did Rome deal with the problem of diverse religions?
  - What challenge did the Jews present to the Roman Empire? How did Rome deal with the Jews?
  - Two major conflicts between Rome and the Jews are described in the article. How did these conflicts arise? What were their consequences?

## Day Two

### C. Focus Discussion

1. Remind students that previously they read about how the Roman Empire dealt with other religions and the special problem posed by the Jewish religion. To review briefly, ask them:
  - How did Rome deal with other religions?
  - What special problems did the Jewish religion pose?
  - How did Rome deal with the Jews?
2. Tell students that they are now going to read about another religion that posed challenges to the Romans—Christianity.

### D. Reading and Discussion—The Treatment of Christians in the Roman Empire

1. Give students the following background:

Christianity began as a sect of the Jewish religion. At first, Christians just tried to convert other Jews. The apostle Paul started preaching to non-Jews, and the religion slowly spread throughout the Roman Empire.

2. Distribute **Handout 13B: The Treatment of Christians in the Roman Empire**. Ask students to look for the following as they read:
  - The different policies that the Romans had toward Christians.
  - Factors that helped spread Christianity throughout the empire.
3. When students finish reading, hold a discussion on Christianity in the Roman Empire. Questions to raise:
  - Why did Nero target the Christians?
  - What helped the spread of Christianity throughout the empire?
  - What different policies did Rome have toward the Christian religion? (Illegal religion, but not enforced; illegal and enforced; legal; freedom of religion; the only religion allowed.)
  - Which do you think was the best policy? Why?

#### E. Small-Group Activity—Freedom of Religion

1. Explain the following:

The United States, like Rome, has people of many different religious beliefs. In fact, many people have come to the United States to escape religious persecution in their home country. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects religious freedom.
2. Tell students that they are going to have an opportunity to give a Roman emperor some advice on religious freedom. Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Distribute **Handout 13C: Freedom of Religion** to each student. Review the instructions.

Answer any questions that student may have. Consider doing the brainstorm about the benefits of religious freedom as a whole class (and writing students' ideas on the board) instead of having students do the brainstorm in their groups. Give them time to complete the activity.
3. When students are ready, tell them that you will role play Theodocius and call on each group to have its speaker deliver a speech. Ask the other students to evaluate each speaker on a sheet of paper using the three criteria under *logos* and *lexis* on the handout. Have them turn in their evaluations of the speakers to you.
4. After all the speakers have given their speeches, make your decision as Theodocius. Be sure to cite the most compelling arguments of the speakers. When you finish, remind students that Theodocius did not adopt freedom of religion, but instead made Christianity the official religion and outlawed all other religions. End the activity by asking students: Why do you think he made this decision?

### Suggestions for CityYouth Action Projects

At the end of the unit, consider doing a CityYouth action project related to the unit.

Students learned in this unit that religious toleration was a major issue in the Roman Empire. Tolerance remains an issue today. Here are some projects related to tolerance:

- Posters. Make posters showing how diversity helps everyone.
- Celebrations. Hold celebrations for different ethnic holidays.
- School issues. Have students think of issues of tolerance and acceptance at their school. Then have them address these issues by doing public service announcements on the school PA. system, making posters, or creating something like “lunch buddies” (in which student cliques are mixed up and students eat with new people).

## The Treatment of Jews in the Roman Empire

At its peak, Rome controlled all the land around the Mediterranean. The large sea was, in effect, a "Roman lake." Its conquered peoples came from many different cultures. They spoke many languages—Greek, Celtic, Aramaic, Egyptian, Numidian, Berber, Phoenician, and more. Each culture had its own religion.

Rome won its empire by force. But it could not control such a vast empire by force. It needed to win the support of its conquered peoples. It did this in several ways. Instead of punishing conquered nations, Rome often treated them as partners. It asked them to take part in the glory and wealth of building the empire. To the less advanced peoples in Gaul (France), Britain, and Iberia (Spain), Rome offered a written language (Latin), a legal system, and well-run cities.

For those in the eastern part of the empire (Greece, Asia Minor, Middle East, and Egypt), Rome offered something different. These people had been deeply influenced by Greek culture. Their religion, art, literature, and language were Greek. For them, Rome honored and extended Greek culture. To all its conquered peoples, Rome tolerated their gods as long as they also honored Roman gods.

The Roman religion had many gods. (See "Roman Gods," on page 3.) The chief god was Jupiter. Romans believed that by practicing their religion, the gods would ensure their success.

### Pronunciation Key

Aelia Capitolina (EE lee uh  
CAP it ole ee nuh)

Aramaic (air uh MAY ik)

Ares (AIR eez)

Bacchus (BOCK us)

Ceres (SEAR eez)

Demeter (di ME tur)

Dionysus (die uh NY sus)

Furies (FYOUR eez)

Gaia (JEE uh)

Hades (HAY deez)

Hadrian (HAY dree un)

Hera (HEAR uh)

Hermes (HER meez)

Iberia (eye BEER ee uh)

Judea (jew DEE uh)

Kronos (CROW nus)

Masada (muh SAW duh)

Phoenician (fuh NEE shun)

Poseidon (poe SIDE un)

Rhea (REE uh)

Syria Palestina (SEAR ee uh  
PAL es tee nuh)

Zealots (ZELL uts)

Like the Romans, almost all the conquered peoples had many gods. They too believed their gods protected them. They knew that other peoples had their own gods. So they found it fairly easy to take part in festivals celebrating Roman gods. It was simply a matter of paying respect to the Romans. In return, the Romans built temples and honored the conquered people's gods.

But the Romans had problems with Jews and Christians. These religions taught that there was just one god. They forbid worshiping other gods. Their members refused to make offerings to Roman gods. They declined to take part in Roman religious festivals. Romans expected these acts as a showing of loyalty. These religions tested Roman tolerance.

### **Rome's Treatment of the Jews**

In 63 B.C., the Romans conquered Judea, the land of the Jews. Rome saw it had a problem when the Jews refused to honor the Roman gods. Rome gave in. It did not make the Jews worship the Roman gods. This solution helped keep the peace and kept tax payments coming to Rome. Soon Rome let Judaism be a legal religion and allowed Jews to worship freely.



In A.D. 70, Roman troops retook Jerusalem from Jewish rebels, destroyed the Great Temple, and razed the city.

But Rome never trusted the Jews. A serious conflict between Rome and the Jews began in A.D. 66 when Nero was emperor. The Roman governor of Judea decided to take money from the Great Temple in Jerusalem. He claimed he was collecting taxes owed the emperor. When rioting broke out, Roman soldiers harshly put it down. Enraged, a group of Jewish radicals, called Zealots, killed the Romans in Jerusalem. They went on to attack Roman troops elsewhere in the Roman province.

Nero sent troops to put down the rebellion. By summer of 68, Rome had regained control of most of the province. Two years later, the Romans retook Jerusalem. They looted and razed the city. They destroyed the Great Temple, the center of the Jewish religion.

## ROMAN GODS

Many of the traditional Roman gods were adopted from Greek mythology. Here are some of the Roman gods (with their Greek names in parentheses).

**Uranus** was the first king of the gods. His wife **Gaia**, the Earth goddess, gave birth to giants, the **Titans**. Fearing the power of his children, Uranus locked them up. But his son **Saturn (Kronos)**, the god of time, escaped and stabbed Uranus. His blood fell to Earth and gave birth to the **Furies**, three goddesses who punished criminals.

Saturn also feared his children would overthrow him. So every time his wife, **Ops (Rhea)**, gave birth, he ate the child in one gulp. But Rhea tricked him when **Jupiter (Zeus)** was born. When he asked for the child, she gave Saturn a rock to eat.

Jupiter overthrew Saturn and the Titans. Known for throwing thunderbolts, Jupiter ruled as king of the gods on Mount Olympus in Greece. The Olympian gods included:

**Juno (Hera)**, Jupiter's wife and queen. Jupiter frequently cheated on Juno. She was constantly exacting revenge on humans or Olympians who fooled around with Jupiter. She was the goddess of marriage.

*(Continued on next page)*

Hundreds of thousands died in the slaughter. About 1,000 Zealots escaped to a fort, called Masada, on a mountaintop in the desert. The Romans laid siege to the fort for three years until it fell. The Zealots killed themselves rather than letting the Romans capture them.

After the Romans crushed this uprising, Jews in the empire had to pay an annual tax to the Temple of Jupiter in Rome. But Judaism remained a legal religion, and Jews continued to practice their religion.

About 60 years later, Emperor Hadrian decided to rebuild Jerusalem and make it a pagan city. He intended to build a temple to Jupiter on the site of the Jews' sacred Great Temple. When Jews heard about his plans, they rebelled in 132. They retook Jerusalem. It took the Roman army three years to put down the rebellion. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed.

Hadrian changed the name of the province from Judea to Syria Palestina. He rebuilt Jerusalem and renamed it Aelia Capitolina.

## Roman Gods, continued.

**Apollo**, god of the Sun. He drove his fiery chariot (the sun) across the sky every day.

**Mercury (Hermes)**, messenger of the gods. He was the son of Jupiter and Maia, the daughter of **Atlas**. Atlas was a Titan who Jupiter punished by making him hold up the world.

**Ceres (Demeter)**, goddess of agriculture. Her beautiful daughter, **Proserpina (Persephone)**, was kidnaped by **Pluto (Hades)**, the god of death and the underworld. Ceres was heartbroken and all plant life started dying. Jupiter sent Mercury to get Proserpina as long as she had not eaten anything in the underworld. But Proserpina had eaten six seeds. So she was made to live with Pluto six months a year (during this time—winter—Ceres mourns for her daughter and plants wither).

**Bacchus (Dionysus)**, god of wine. Bacchus was the son of Jupiter and Semele, a mortal. Jupiter had disguised himself when he courted Semele. Learning of his betrayal, Juno also in disguise went to Semele and told her to make Jupiter remove his disguise. Semele got Jupiter to promise to grant her a wish. Her wish was that he show his true self. Jupiter had to honor his promise. When he did, Semele was burned to a crisp.

Other Olympian gods included **Neptune (Poseidon)**, god of the sea; **Mars (Ares)**, god of war; and **Minerva (Athena)**, goddess of wisdom.

Jews were banned on pain of death from entering the city. They were allowed in only one day a year, on the anniversary of the destruction of the Great Temple. Jews continued to live throughout the Roman Empire, but they had lost their homeland.

### For Discussion

1. What methods did Rome use to win over the diverse people in its empire? How did Rome deal with the problem of diverse religions?
2. What challenge did the Jews present to the Roman Empire? How did Rome deal with the Jews?
3. Two major conflicts between Rome and the Jews are described in the article. How did these conflicts arise? What were their consequences?

## The Treatment of Christians in the Roman Empire

Rome first became aware of Christianity around A.D. 30. It did nothing to stop it. Emperor Tiberius thought the sect might weaken the Jewish religion. He asked the Senate to legalize the Christian faith and make Christ a Roman god. But the Senate refused. Instead, it made Christianity an "illegal superstition," a crime under Roman law.

Christianity was now illegal, but Tiberius ordered Roman officials not to enforce the law. This policy lasted about 30 years, until the time of Nero.

Local people, however, often attacked and rioted against

### Pronunciation Key

Constantine (KON stun teen)  
Decius (DEE shus)  
Diocletian (die oh KLEE shun)  
Gallienus (gal eye EE nus)  
Nero (NEAR oh)  
Tacitus (TASS i tuss)  
Theodosius (THEE oh doh shus)  
Trajan (TRAY jun)



In A.D. 64, a great fire burned Rome. The emperor, Nero, blamed Christians for the fire.

Christians. They especially targeted Christian preachers.

### Nero's Persecution

On the night of July 18, A.D. 64, a fire began at the Circus Maximus. This was the great arena in Rome for chariot races and games. The fire spread quickly and for six days burned much of the city, including Emperor Nero's palace.

A rumor spread that Nero himself had caused the great fire. He was also accused of playing the lyre (like a small harp) while watching the fire. He probably did play the lyre. But he did not cause the fire. Even so, the people of Rome blamed him.

Fearful that Roman mobs would turn on him, Nero looked for a scapegoat to blame for the fire. He decided to blame the Christians. The Christian religion was still illegal. So it was easy to order mass arrests, trials, and executions. The public began blaming the Christians rather than Nero for the great fire.

The Christians suffered horrible deaths. The Roman historian Tacitus described Nero's methods of execution:

Dressed in wild animal skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be lit after dark . . . . Nero provided his Gardens for the spectacle, and exhibited displays in the Circus . . . .

For years, Christians lived in fear. Many Roman pagans wanted to see the illegal sect destroyed. But Christians kept gaining new believers. In 110, Emperor Trajan tried a compromise. He stated that Christians "are not to be sought out; but if they are accused and convicted, they must be punished . . . ." In other words, the religion was still illegal, but officials were not to look for Christians.

For the next 100 years, Christians practiced their faith openly. Rome's system of roads helped Christians spread the gospel throughout the empire. And the Christians' openness to people from all groups and

classes helped them gain many converts.

But in 250, Emperor Decius started persecuting Christians again. He wanted Romans to follow the pagan religion. Many Christians died. But when Gallienus became emperor, he halted the persecution. Gallienus then went one step further. He recognized Christianity as a legal religion for the first time. Gallienus hoped to bring religious peace to the empire.

### **Christian Bloodbath**

For almost 40 years, the Christian Church thrived. Then, in 303, Emperor Diocletian began the last terrible persecution.

Diocletian had come to power in a crisis. Prices of goods were soaring. German tribes threatened the western part of the empire. The Persian Empire was attacking in the east.

Diocletian moved boldly. He set price controls. He doubled the size of the army. To govern the empire more easily, he broke it into two parts—the Greek-speaking east and the Latin-speaking west. Diocletian ruled the eastern part.

Suspicious of Christians, Diocletian started persecuting them. He demanded that all Christian soldiers resign from the army. He forbid Christian worship services. He ordered churches destroyed. He had Christian members of the government tortured and killed.

When Christian uprisings took place, he got tougher. He ordered the arrest, torture, and killing of priests. In 304, Rome ordered that all Christians honor the pagan gods or face death.

Diocletian and the western emperor retired in 305. Diocletian named their successors, but a civil war broke out. Other Romans claimed the right to be emperor. The war raged on for almost a decade. Even so, the persecution of Christians continued. Galerius, Diocletian's handpicked successor in the eastern empire, hated Christians and started killing them. Christians were crucified and burned alive. Crowds in Roman arenas shouted, "Down with Christians!"

Galerius saw that he had failed to stamp out the Christian religion. Dying of cancer, he stopped the persecution in 311. He begged for Christians to pray for his health. But the killing started again when he died.

Constantine was fighting for control of the western empire. He had a vision that he would win a big battle if he fought under the sign of the cross. He had workers mark his soldiers' shields with crosses before the battle. When they won, Constantine converted to Christianity.

Constantine won the civil war and became the new western emperor. Constantine supported the

Christian religion. The eastern emperor supported the pagan religion. In 313, they agreed to compromise and allow every person "to follow the religion that he chooses."

The two emperors, however, kept battling one another. In 324, Constantine won and became emperor of both parts of the Roman Empire. With Constantine's backing, Christianity became the strongest religion in the empire.

In 395, Emperor Theodosius made Christianity Rome's new state religion. Christians, who had endured so much, started attacking the pagan religion. They closed temples and banned sacrifices to pagan gods. They even changed some pagan celebrations into Christian ones. For example, the church changed the birthday of the sun god on the 25th of December into the celebration of the birth of Christ.

### For Discussion

1. Why did Nero target the Christians?
2. What helped the spread of Christianity throughout the empire?
3. What different policies did Rome have toward the Christian religion? Which do you think was the best policy? Why?

## Freedom of Religion

Imagine that you are an advisor to Emperor Theodosius. Theodosius is a Christian. He is thinking that he will make Christianity the official state religion and ban all other religions.

He has asked for your advice. You are going to get two minutes to give him your advice.

You are going to advise him that the best policy is to permit freedom of religion. In your two-minute presentation, you should:

1. Tell about the harm that religious persecution has caused in Roman history.
2. Explain why religious freedom for everyone is best.

In your group, do the following:

1. Go through the two articles on the treatment of Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire and find examples of how religious persecution hurt people.
2. Brainstorm ideas about why religious freedom is a good idea.
3. Prepare your speech. (It must only last two minutes.)
4. Practice the speech and decide who will deliver it.

Remember what the Greek philosopher Aristotle explained about speech-making. He said that every speech is made of two parts:

1. *Logos*. This is the content of the speech. A great speech must:
  - (a) Have something to say.
  - (b) Be organized and clear.
  - (c) Have a powerful beginning, a good middle, and a strong ending.
2. *Lexis*. This is the delivery of the speech. A great speaker connects with the audience. The speaker:
  - (a) Looks at the audience.
  - (b) Speaks clearly.
  - (c) Makes strong gestures.

Follow Aristotle's advice.