Ancient Rome

Roman Origin Stories:

The Story of Aeneas

The Story of Romulus and Remus
Rome’s Legendary Origins

- No written record of the origins of Rome exist
- People probably lived in Rome starting in 900s BCE
One of the first Roman heroes is Aeneas
- His story is an epic poem called the Aenid
  - Written by Virgil (29 BCE)
- The Aenid is based off of events from *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*
Aeneas

- Aeneas is the son of the Roman goddess Venus
- Aeneas lived in the city of Troy
- When the Greeks destroyed Troy, he fled
  - Looking for a new place to settle
Aeneas
Aeneas

- After an adventurous journey, he reached Italy
  - Settled in the area of Rome
- Aeneas battles several groups of Italians before emerging victorious
- Aeneas then fulfills his destiny as ancestor to the Roman people
- Quote from the Aenid:
  - “It is the work of your children's children to rule the world.” - Aeneas’s father to Aeneas
Aeneas
Romulus and Remus

Many years after Aeneas settled in Italy, the story of Romulus and Remus takes place. It begins with two brothers, Amulius and Numitor, both of whom are descendants of Aeneas.
Romulus and Remus
Cast of Characters

- Amulius – King of Alba Longa
- Numitor – Amulius’s Brother
- Romulus – Grandson of Numitor; Twin brother to Remus
- Remus – Grandson of Numitor; Twin brother to Romulus
- Faustulus – Shepherd
- Acca Larentia – Wife of Faustulus

As told by:
http://museums.ncl.ac.uk/Reticulum/NORTHERNFRONTIER/WeCameWeSawWeConq/WhereDidTheyComeFrom/Story.htm
Amulius fought his brother, Numitor, and sent him into exile away from his family. Amulius killed all the sons of Numitor and forced Numitor's daughter, Rhea Silvia, to become a Vestal Virgin. Vestal Virgins were not allowed to marry or have children.

The kingdom of Alba Longa was ruled by the wicked king, Amulius.
One day Mars, the God of War, saw Rhea Silvia and fell in love with her.

Some time later she gave birth to twin boys.
Amulius was very angry at this and he ordered his slave to throw the two twins into the River Tiber. But the slave left the twins in their cradle to give them a chance. They floated down the river.

A she-wolf rescued the two babies and looked after them.
A shepherd called Faustulus saw the wolf with the baby boys. He took them home to his wife. They called the boys Romulus and Remus.

When they grew up the boys became shepherds like Faustulus. One day they had a fight with another group of shepherds. Remus was arrested and sent to Numitor as a prisoner because it was his shepherds he had been fighting. When Numitor heard the story he realized that Remus was his grandson! He told Romulus and Remus what had happened to him and their mother.
Romulus and Remus then went to live with their grandfather in Alba Longa, but they got bored and missed the countryside where they grew up. They decided to move back to the banks of the River Tiber where Faustulus had found them and build their own city. But the twins argued over where the city should be built. Romulus wanted to build it on the Aventine Hill and Remus wanted to build it on the Capitoline Hill. In the end they built two cities!

Romulus and Remus then attacked their Great Uncle Amulius and killed him.
The arguing didn't stop. Remus teased his brother about the height of his city walls, saying they were too low. The brothers had a fight and Romulus killed Remus.

Romulus became King of the new city, which was called Roma in his honor.
If the people of Rome are descended from Aeneas (or Romulus), explain how they are related to a god.

Why would a relation to a god be important?

Is one brother more important than the other? Why or why not?

Why do you think the Romans made these stories about their past?