Romulus and Remus: The Founders of Rome

According to legend, Remus and Romulus were born as grandchildren to King Numito on the Italian Peninsula. Numito's brother, Amulius, started a war to overthrow his brother, after which Numito was imprisoned and his daughter, Rea Sylvia, was forced to become a Vestal Virgin (female priests), so that she would not bear any children.

But Sylvia became pregnant and gave birth to twins, boys, who were called Romulus and Remus. It is said that Mars, the God of War, was their father. Amulius wanted the children dead and ordered them to be thrown in the Tiber River. But the children were put into a basket and floated to safety. The babies were found by a she-wolf, which took care of the children and breast-fed them.

A shepherd came across the basket and adopted the boys. The boys grew as shepherds and became natural leaders. When they became adults, they realized they who they truly were and rebelled against Amulius. They reinstated the true king, Numito, and set out to look for a place to build their own city. In 753 BCE they stopped at the Tiber River, where they had been found by the shepherd, and where there were seven hills.

They decided to build a city on one of the hills. But they could not decide who should rule in it, so they asked the gods for a sign. They each awaited an answer from the gods on a different hill. Remus saw the first sign – six vultures flew above him. Shortly after that, Romulus saw twelve vultures flying over his head and claimed kingship for himself. Remus started to mock at his brother and the two began to fight. Remus was killed and Romulus went on to build his own city and name it after himself: Rome.

1. **Is this a true story or a myth? How do you know?**

2. **Rome was born from conflict. Do you think Rome will grow up to have a peaceful or a violent culture? Explain your answer.**

3. **Based on the reading, do you think Rome was an empire that valued religion? Why or why not?**

Ancient Rome: The Italian Peninsula

Directions: Use an Internet-enabled device to label the following geographic places:

Tiber River	Rome (city)	Sicily	Alps
Adriatic Sea	Ionian Sea	Corsica	Mediterranean Sea
Sardinia	Danube River	Gaul	Tyrrhenian
Sea	Carthage (city)		