**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Band:\_\_\_\_\_**

**Roman Religion vs. Christianity**

**Task:**

**Explain the beliefs of the Romans compared to Christians. Explain how Christianity was a threat to the Roman Empire.**

There are many differences between the beliefs of the Romans and the Christians. The Romans believed were **monotheistic/polytheistic (circle correct answer)**. This means that they believed in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Some of the gods the Romans believed in were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is different from Christians who are **monotheistic/polytheistic (circle correct answer)**. This means that they believed in\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The God that Christians believed was named \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. His teachings stated \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is different from the values of the Romans that stated \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Christianity was a threat to the Roman Empire because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. As a result, the Romans treated Christians harshly, for example \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Roman Religion vs. Christianity**

The Romans were polytheistic. There were thousands of Roman gods and goddesses. There Ancient Romans believed that gods lived everywhere. In ancient Rome, everything had a spirit in a charge of it. For everything imaginable they had a god or goddess in charge. Mars, for example, was the god of war. This meant he was good at fighting and it meant that he had most of all the soldiers at heart. A Roman soldier would hence most likely pray to Mars for strength in battle. Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, intelligence and learning. Not many soldiers would ask her for help, but a schoolboy would ask her to help him learn his grammar or understand his math better or the emperor would ask her to give him wisdom so that he might rule the country wisely. In Roman religion every household had its own personal spirits which protected it. The lares were the spirits of the family's ancestors and the penates were kind spirits who guarded the larder. Little figurines of these spirits were kept in a small household shrine, called the lararium. The spirits would be worshipped by the family on special days. Bits of food or wine might be sacrificed to them.

During the reign of Roman Emperor Augustus, a Jewish child named Jesus was born in the Roman area of Judea. Later, during the reign of the next Roman Emperor, Tiberius, Jesus began teaching in public. The religion of Christianity is based on his teachings. Much of our information about these teachings came from the Gospels (“Good News”), the writing of Jesus’ disciples (followers). The Gospels were published in the New Testament that Christians added to the Jewish bible, which Christians call the Old Testament. Many Jesus’ followers believed that he was the Messiah (savoir or liberator), he was called Christ. His followers were called Christians. Christians were monotheistic, meaning they only believed in one God.

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| **Values of the Romans** | **Beliefs of Christians** |
| 1. If someone harms you, harm him back. 2. Strike down your enemies before they strike you. 3. To try to gain wealth is the Roman’s goal in life. 4. To be strong if to be like the gods. 5. Success, not being righteous (good), is a Roman’s first concern. 6. Ask for no mercy (compassion, understanding) and give none. 7. The gods honor the winners no matter how they gain success. 8. We must defeat our enemies in battle. 9. Honor your emperors and the gods will reward you. 10. Your first loyalty is to your emperor | Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs if the kingdom of heaven.  Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  Blessed are the meek (humble, gentle), for they will inherit the earth.  Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (goodness), they will be filled.  Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy (compassion).  Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.  Blessed are those who are persecuted (mistreated) because of their righteousness (goodness), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  Blessed are you when people persecute (mistreat) you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.  Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven..  - Gospel of Matthew 5:3-12 |

Due to the different beliefs between Romans and Christians, Emperor Trajan stated the following:

“Christianity threatens the existence of the Roman Empire. Rather than giving their loyalty to me, they (the Christians) only accept the teachings of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they refuse to fight for Rome, claiming that it goes against their religion. The religion gains large numbers of followers everyday.”

“The method I have used towards those who have been labeled Christians is as follows: I asked them whether they are Christians. If they say ‘Yes”, then I ask them again. If they admit that they are Christians again, then they are sentenced to death.