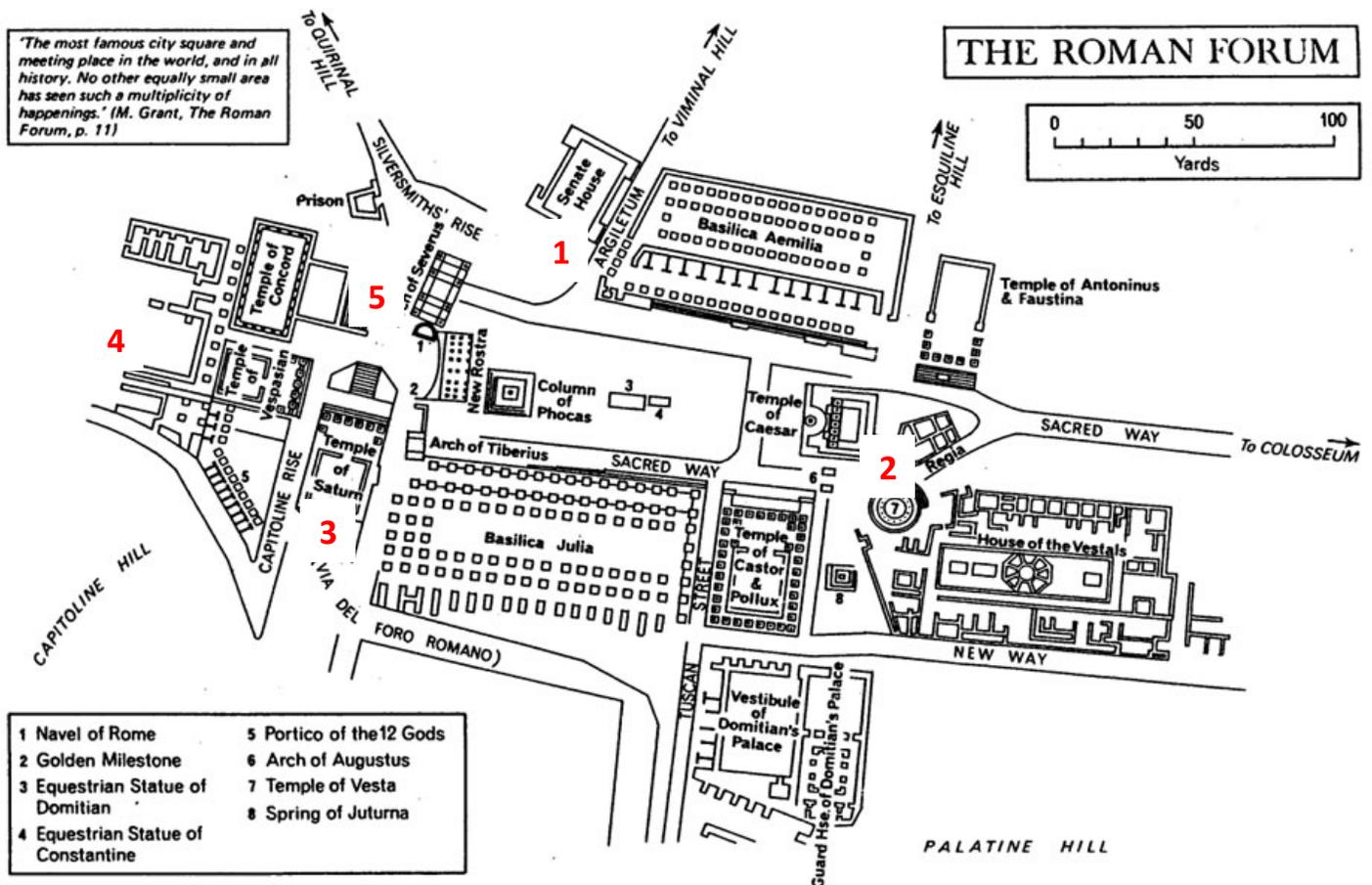


# Finding the I CAN spirit in Rome: Civics



This tour requires about 1-1.5 hours, and we recommend taking pencils and paper along.

As with the innovation tour, the purpose of this tour is not to convey the maximum amount of information in a short period of time, but to let the young people with whom you are traveling engage with what they see. The tools used in this tour come from leading historical and arts educators. We hope that this tour can get your young changemakers excited to learn more about the ways in which the Romans designed models for civic engagement that are still in use today.



**First Stop: Standing at the lower terrace in front of the Church SS Luca and Martina, with a view overlooking the Forum**

## **Compelling and overarching Question: How do you craft a Civic Community with people from everywhere?**

It may look like a bomb exploded here, but this is a place with so much human history in the air, that you kind of have to just stand and breathe and appreciate it for a moment before diving in. It was ravaged by a fire in AD 283, but by that time it had already become the center of Roman historical imagination and political life. It was a forum, a marketplace, a public square at the heart of an empire.

Let's think a bit about public spaces before we talk about this one. Put yourself in the shoes of a government official in Rome. From what you know about Rome, what are the values you think the people in government wanted everyone to understand: (Collect these from the kids, prompt them if necessary)

- Rome is an open city. Rome really was always seen as a place that was owned and shaped by people on the move. A city of wanderers, of migrants, of vagabonds, former slaves and warriors—that was the stuff Rome was made of. While other ancient civilizations went through great troubles to ensure that people understood who belonged and who did not belong to the family or the tribe, Rome was indeed a welcoming city.
- Role of Gods/religion
- Rule of law
- Power of rulers, power of the people
- Importance of trade
- How your community was founded/founding myth

If you were an architect, or an urban planner, and you were to think about creating a public space that allowed people to understand these values, what would you build? (Again, collect, prompt if necessary).

- Tacky tourist attraction on founding myth
- Temples
- Courthouse
- Parliament
- Executive building
- Marketplace
- Public marketplace
- Place for shows and spectacles

In this tour, we are going to find the remnants of how the Romans created these things over the centuries.

***Phase I: From 600BCE to about 200BCE.***

This forum is the oldest part of the city, and very early on was shaped to convey some key messages. The first one was: We were founded by Romulus as a city for people from everywhere. This is what we call the “FOUNDING MYTH” of Rome. ***What are founding myths in your country?*** Why do they matter? Well in Rome, the story of Romulus and Remus mattered a lot as a legend at the heart of the city that allowed everyone to feel like they belonged to a story. Rome was imagined to be built on the determination of one twin to create a city that would give protection to the unprotected.

This forum was the home of this founding myth. This is where—according to legend—Romulus and Remus were washed ashore in a basket and found by the wolf mother. For centuries, the tree and the cave and even the hut where Romulus was said to have lived were here and celebrated as a tourist attraction. Americans didn’t invent tacky tourism: people always have loved a good story, and while there are no selfies to prove it, we have ample reference from texts from over 2000 years ago talking about the hut and how it was tacky and fake. Some of the first inventions of the Romans are underground here, among them the most important drain in history: the cloaca. Millions of man-hours built the first sewage system—it was a huge undertaking that allowed a city to grow that did not smell. The early Roman city dwellers also built temples and government buildings, but they were burned down and paved over around 100BCE.

The second message that this forum was supposed to convey was WE HATE KINGS. WE LOVE FREEDOM. The Romans’ sense of civic pride was very much attached to a strong and vocal hatred for kings. They didn’t mind emperors, who could be elected, but kings, who claimed their right to rule by blood, were the worst. Romans got rid of their kings around 463BCE after a battle of the people against the last king—they erected a temple on the forum so that people would always remember that Roman is NOT a city ruled by kings, but by its people. It was a temple to Castor and Pollux, two gods, who were allegedly seen fighting in the battle alongside the Romans. A day or so later, they were spotted grazing their horses right here on the forum. (See the temple ruin of Castor and Pollux). Instead of kings, the Romans elected Consuls, always two at a time, for one year. The order of Consuls in power is how Romans kept track of time. There were lists of all the consuls in the Forum, which was sort of a cheat-sheet on the chronology of Roman history. They also had someone bang a nail into the temple of Jupiter on the same day every year to track the passage of time.

The third message that was set up early on (and you can’t see anymore) was WE RESPECT THE RULE OF LAW. The twelve tables with the basic rules of Roman law were put

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together sometime in the mid fifth century BCE and displayed here in the Forum so that everyone knew their rights as a citizen of Rome. These rules were a broad collection of rules governing everything from how to deal with a neighbor whose trees are growing into your property to how to sue someone in court. The Romans loved to sue one another. They were constantly in court arguing their cases in front of judges: the two longest buildings in this forum (that you can no longer see) were Basilica, or courthouses where they fought over all sorts of things.

So the early messages of this public space were clear: We are Rome, a city open to all. We have are ruled by the people, and we have rules.

***What about Democracy in Rome?*** It took a while for Romans to sort out who had power and how much. First it was only the ruling families with money, the patricians. Then the common people, the plebeians, fought hard to get their own voice and representation. They fought to clarify the freedom of citizens, freedom to participate in government and freedom to have a voice. Around 360BCE they formalized the role of the Tribunals, opened up the role of Consul to anyone who could be elected and formalized the role of the Senate as a rule-setting body.

So here we are in about 360 BCE. We have no kings. We have a system of power in which achievement and wealth matter more than birth. Now, if it takes money and accomplishment to get power—what are people going to do to get more money and power?

[Ask them: what are ways that people might have tried to gain money and power?]

Answer: ***CONQUER OTHER PEOPLE.*** Victories are your surest way to fame in ancient Rome, because a) they give you more money b) they give you glory. When you want to conquer other people, you need roads, and money—and so the Romans set about innovating bridges, roads, coins...all so that they could literally pave the way to power for individual leaders and for the community as a whole. So you can see the connection to a new power structure, to the rule of law, to innovation to the expansion of empire!

***Phase II: 200BCE-27BCE: The height of the Republic.*** Over the next 200 years, the Romans became the richest people of any in the known world. Thousands of captives became slaves who worked in mines, fields and mills to drive Roman economy forward. All that money came flooding in, right here, to the Forum, to the central bank of the empire. They got so rich, that they got rid of taxes.

***Phase III: Imperial Rome (see your time-table).*** This was the time of the rise and fall of the Roman imperial system, with first the largest expansion of the empire into Africa and Asia and then the decline and splitting of the empire in 330AD.

**ANYWAY.** Here we are at the Forum. We are going to visit a few symbols of the themes we have discussed: the power of the Senate, the role of the Gods, the management of resources for the empire and the celebration of military conquest.

## 1. Starting Point: The Curia Julia

***Theme: Leading Families and the Law***

***What it is:*** The Curia was the meeting place of the Senate. The original of this building, called the Curia Julia, was opened in 29 BCE, named after Julius Caesar. Although the Senate became weaker as the Imperial model replaced the Republic, the Senate still consisted of roughly 600 noblemen who could make the emperor's life difficult if he angered them.

***Compelling question/Focus of Discovery: Can buildings help you build a political brand?***

***Appreciative Inquiry:***

*What do you see?* Get kids to describe in detail what they see. Leave time. Try to get half of kids to say something. [It looks a lot like a modern building, very square, no columns or open-air parts like other Roman building, pretty glass window, it looks like something has been removed from the front of it - maybe statues? lots of pretty multi-colored tile on the inside; kind of looks like the interior of the Pantheon; looks almost like it's being used to store something

*What do you think it means?* Let them try to figure it out and guess: It may have been built later, stuff has been removed, meeting place, it was an important building...

*What does it make you wonder?* Again, let them share ideas and engage them in asking questions: Why is it so well preserved? Why did the Senate only include leading families? What were the jobs of the Senate? Why did the Senate still exist and have powers after the Republic ended?

***Fun Facts:***

- The Senate was created in 580 BCE as a collection of the “leading families” of Rome, who had the power to make laws and elect the consul (who later became the emperor). Although the Senate lost much of its political power after the rise of the empire, they still had some influence on Roman society and politics. Right in front of the senate is where public political assemblies were held. Speeches and public debates were had in spaces right out in front of the Curia (you can't see the pits now). There was no “television” or twitter to get your message across; if you were a politician, this is where you stood to “get your ideas’ out to the masses, and they travelled like wild fire.

- Ironically, it has been maintained and renovated by the rulers who had little interest in having their power checked by the Senate. Augustus, the first of the Roman Emperors, claimed in his biography "I built the Senate House... with the power of the state entirely in my hands by universal consent, I extinguished the flames of civil wars, and then relinquished my control, transferring the Republic back to the authority of the Senate and the Roman people. For this service I was named Augustus by a decree of the Senate". That was a stretch of the truth at best.
- Then it was spruced up and renovated after the fall of the Roman empire by the Church. And finally, in the 1920s, the church decorations were removed and it was restored to a Roman monument by the fascist ruler of Italy Mussolini, who wanted to glorify the Roman empire. **Why do you think he chose to put so much \$ into renovating the building that housed the SENATE, even though he was an authoritarian ruler? (Discuss!)**
- The original facade of the Curia was adorned with statues of Minerva and Victoria (goddesses of wisdom and victory respectively), representing the Senate as wisdom and the empire as victory/power. Why do you think these gods were chosen to represent these two aspects of Roman government?

**Activity:** Take 10 minutes in groups of 5 to think about how you would write a short speech declaring that the people have the right to power, not those who have money or noble blood. Why do all people have the right to have a say in their government? Declare your principles and your speech right here on the steps!

## 2. The Temple of Saturn

**Theme: Money, Holidays and Empire**

**What it is:** Although the Temple of Saturn did act as a temple, it was also home to the Aerarium Populi Romani, or the state treasury. Over time, money moved around and other treasuries were used, but this temple was, for a long time, the center of Roman finances.

**Compelling Question/Focus of Discovery:** What does Christmas have to do with money in Ancient Rome?

**Appreciative Inquiry:**

*What do you see?* Get kids to describe in detail what they see. Leave time. E.g.: It has several columns, There is a large Latin inscription on the front, the columns are smooth while the columns of the building next to it are fluted, the columns seem to be rusted/have different colors or are even just different colors from each other, It's on a hill...

*What do you think it means?* Let them try to interpret what they see. The inscription means “Destroyed by Fire, Restored By the Senate and the People of Rome.”

Maybe the few columns next to it were part of the same building? This building has a very central and obvious location...

*What does it make you wonder?* (e.g.: Why are the columns so weirdly colored? Was this building important? How big was the building?)

### ***Fun facts***

- This building's primary purpose was as a temple to Saturn. What Saturn represented is a little unclear to us today, but he probably was a version of the Greek titan Kronos. He was celebrated yearly on December 17th in the Saturnalia festival. Overall it was a day of celebration and partying. On this day, people removed the woolen bands that were usually tied around the statue of Saturn that stood inside the temple, so Saturn was associated with freedom. Slaves were allowed to do as they pleased, and families exchanged gifts. This party-day became quite popular around the Roman empire—many scholars assume that the traditions of Christmas are in part derived from those of Saturnalia. ***Why do you think the Church adopted this tradition?***
- The aerarium, was not Rome's only treasury, but it was central and public. It dealt with public payments and expenses and money that the Romans collected in their newly conquered provinces. It was also an archive for important documents (laws and decrees, for example) so that they were stored safely and could also be viewed if necessary.
- It was indeed damaged very heavily in 360AD, and it's interesting that they invested so much in rebuilding it just as the empire was declining and the Christian church was starting to repurpose temples into churches left and right.
- There are a few reasons why the columns look so odd. The front six columns are made from one type of granite while the side two are made from a different type and are a different color, although today that may be hard to tell. In addition, three of the eight columns are monoliths (meaning carved out of one solid piece of granite), and the other five are comprised of two pieces of granite that have been attached to each other. This is because the only part of these columns that were designed for the building were the capitals (the heads of the columns) - the rest were recycled from earlier temples.

### **3. Regia**

#### **Theme: The Blurry Line between Religion and Power**

***What it is:*** The Regia was thought to have been built by the early Roman consuls as their residence and later was the office of the “Chief Priest” or Pontifex Maximus. When Julius

Caesar was Pontifex Maximus, he performed his duties from the Regia. It was also used as an assembly area for the College of Pontiffs - the pontifices (Pontifex Maximus included) were important Roman priests who, among other things, regulated deity-to-commoner relations.

***Compelling Question/Focus of Discovery: How do rituals and celebrations build community?***

***Appreciative Inquiry:***

*What do you see?* Get kids to describe in detail what they see. There is very little to see, so they will have to piece together an image from what is there. E.g. clearly the building was made of stone, it has a fairly important position, there's a lot of white marble, clearly it has pretty much completely decayed and fallen down - maybe it was destroyed?

*What does it mean?* It probably had an important function since it was made of white marble. This is probably one of the earlier buildings which is why it has completely collapsed.

*What does it make you wonder?* What was this building used for? Why is the space for it still marked off after all of this time? Is there a reason why it is completely gone but the buildings around it are still intact? Why is it made of stone when everything around it is made of marble?

***Fun facts***

- This is one of the oldest buildings to have been built on this site, possibly before the founding of the republic by the “kings”. Story had it that this is where the king lived who took the reins after Romulus, the city’s founder.
- That king’s name was allegedly Numa Pompilius. Even though it is hard to reconstruct what actually happened at that time since there are basically no written records, he was credited by later writers for establishing the basic model of the calendar we use today and for solidifying several of the religious institutions and cults of Rome.
- Although pontifices existed under the Roman kings, they gained power under the Republic. Their leader, the pontifex maximus, was the head administrator of religious law. He regulated religious ceremonies that attempted to please the gods, consecrated places dedicated to the gods, and regulated the calendar, among many other things.
- Romans didn’t really *believe* in the gods the way we think about God or religion today. They knew the gods were there and the Romans lived their lives in a way that would allow them to have good relationships with the gods. But there was no religious “belief system”, it was a religion that was based entirely on how to live and celebrate the gods so that they would support the people with their plans on earth.

**4. Tabularium**

## ***Theme: Paper and power***

### ***What it is:***

The Tabularium was used to store and preserve the laws and deeds of Rome (which were held on tabulae, hence the name). It was built right up against the Capitoline Hill on the edge of the Roman Forum, and it was built as part of a public works project to redevelop the Capitoline Hill after a fire.

***Compelling Question/Focus of Discovery: What does paper and government documents have to do with individual power and rights?*** Ask kids the question of how they think records are kept today, and why they matter. What kinds of documents are kept by the government and why? Who has access to them? Why does it matter?

### ***Appreciative Inquiry:***

*What do you see?* Get kids to describe in detail what they see. It looks very haphazard like it's two different buildings squished on top of each other, the top one looks newer, the bottom half has arches, it has one singular tower (maybe a steeple), it's a lot taller than anything else

*What do you think it means?* This building was either renovated or built on top of in the more modern age; Maybe it became a church? (because of the tower/steeple), Maybe it was reused? Maybe it needed to store something big?

What does it make you wonder? Why is it so big? Why is it made out of two different materials and two different styles (basically why does it look like two different buildings?)

### ***Fun facts***

- The reason that this building looks the way it does is that up until the 16th century the building was in pretty constant use and as such survived in pretty good condition. In the 1500s, however, the upper levels of the building were demolished and replaced with what you see now in order to become the Palazzo del Senatore (Senatorial Palace). This explains why the building seems to come from two different time periods - because, in fact, it does.
- This building is much bigger than others in the Roman Forum and is meant to seem to tower over everything. This seems to be for two reasons - one, it is aesthetically pleasing to have the long Roman Forum end in a large, imposing building. Two, in addition to holding Roman laws, the tabularium was the (or possible one of the) official record-keeping offices of Ancient Rome, therefore needing to hold a lot of information that would have taken up a large physical space. The Tabularium also contained some offices of city officials, another reason that it would have to be so large.

- The Tabularium was part of a public works project in the first century BCE. It was built in conjunction with rebuilding efforts on the Temple of Jupiter, which was destroyed by a fire a few years earlier. Fires were not uncommon in Ancient Rome and eventually a firefighting force was formed and kept on hand permanently as the Ancient Romans realized that the amount of wooden buildings in the city meant that the risk was always high. This includes the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE - the one during which Nero apocryphally fiddled - which destroyed around two-thirds of the city of Rome.

## 5. Arch of Septimius Severus

### *Theme: Celebrating Military Victory*

**What it is:** One of Rome's most finely decorated triumphal arches, this arch commemorates Rome's victory over the Parthians in the late 2nd century CE. It was dedicated to Septimius Severus and his two sons, hence the name.

**Goal: Can military victories and celebrations shape your imagination of power?**

### *Appreciative Inquiry:*

*What do you see?* Get kids to describe in detail what they see. Leave time. Try to get half of kids to say something. It's huge, there are three arches and there are engravings above the smaller side arches around the bigger middle arch, there is a very long inscription in the header, the engravings look like battle scenes

*What do you think it means?* Let them try to interpret what they see. - maybe this was the entrance/exit to the Roman Forum? It seems to be meant to be walked through, I would assume that this was meant to celebrate something...

*What does it make you wonder?* Why is this in the Roman Forum? What are the engravings depicting? Who is "Septimius Severus" What does the inscription say?

### *Fun facts*

- Septimius Severus was emperor from 193 to 211. He was a military man and the military was key to his success in his takeover of the city, so he gave the army a significant role in the ruling of Rome. He also won over the soldiers by giving them better benefits and pay.
- The inscription on the arch dedicates it to Septimius Severus as well as his two sons Caracalla and Geta. It is meant to commemorate the Roman victory over the Parthians and the following annexation of Mesopotamia into the Roman Empire. The inscription was altered after Caracalla murdered Geta

- The structure of the arch is not just decorative. The biggest, main arch was meant for traffic to go through, and it was along the Via Sacra which followed the Roman Forum - in other words, to pass through the Roman Forum one would go through the arch. The other two were blocked off with steps, although foot traffic would likely have been able to go through. In addition, one could actually go up into the arch via a staircase inside.

**Activity:** Imagine if you were to make an arch of triumph over the SDGs. How you would design and decorate an arch that with symbols and images to celebrate that we conquered the challenges of our times? Talk about it, and draw it on a piece of paper!

*This tour was created for the 2019 I CAN summit in Rome by **got history?**, an organization dedicated to ensuring that everyone has the history they need to be an engaged member of democracy.*

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