The Aztecs worshiped many gods. Despite worshiping many gods, there were certain gods that the Aztecs considered more important and powerful than the others. The most important god to the Aztecs was Huitzilopochtli.( wee-tsee-loh-poch'-tlee) Here are some of the most important gods to the Aztecs.

1. **The Sun – Zahraa K.**

One of the most important aspects of Aztec religion was the sun. The Aztecs called themselves the "People of the Sun". They felt that in order for the sun to rise each day the Aztecs needed to perform rituals and sacrifices to give the sun strength.

1. **The god Huitzilopochtli** -**MJ**.( wee-tsee-loh-poch'-tlee )- The most fearsome and powerful of the Aztec gods, Huitzilopochtli was the god of war, the sun, and sacrifice. He was also the patron god of the Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlan(te noch tit lan) The Great Temple in the center of the city was built in honor of Huitzilopochtli .( wee-tsee-loh-poch'-tlee )- and Tlaloc. His name is thought to mean "left-handed hummingbird". He was often drawn with feathers and holding a scepter made from a snake.
2. **Tlaloc** –**Hassan B**- Tlaloc was the god of rain and water. While Tlaloc helped the Aztecs much of the time by sending rain and causing plants to grow, he also could get angry and send thunder storms and hail. Tlaloc was worshiped at the Great Temple in the city of Tenochtitlan and also at the top of a tall mountain named Mount Tlaloc. He was often drawn with fangs and big goggle-like eyes.
3. **Quetzalcoatl** – **Abraham**- Quetzalcoatl was the god of life and wind. His name means "feathered serpent" and he was usually drawn as a serpent which could fly, very much like a dragon. When Cortez first arrived at the Aztecs, many thought that he was the god Quetzalcoatl.
4. **Tezcatlipoca** – **Skye** - Tezcatlipoca was a powerful god associated with many things including magic, the night, and the earth. He was a rival god to Quetzalcoatl. According to Aztec mythology, he was the first god to create the sun and the earth, but was struck down by Quetzalcoatl and turned into a jaguar. There was a large temple built to him in the city of Tenochtitlan just south of the Great Temple. His name meant "smoking mirror".
5. **Chicomecoatl** – **Maya** Chicomecoatl was the Aztec goddess of farming, nourishment, and corn. She was often drawn as a young girl carrying flowers or a woman using the sun as a shield. Her name meant "seven snakes".
6. **Priests** –**Ali** The Priests made sure that the gods were offered the correct offerings. They had to perform all sorts of ceremonies in the temples to make sure that the gods were not angry with the Aztecs. Priests had a lot of training. They were well-respected and powerful in the Aztec society.
7. **The Afterlife** – **Muhammad** -The Aztecs believed in a number of levels of heaven and the underworld. Depending on how you died would determine where you went. Those who died in battle would go to the top level of heaven. Those who drowned would go to the underworld.

**The Aztec calendar** played an important role in their religion. They held a number of religious ceremonies and festivals throughout the year. The largest of the Aztec festivals was the Xiuhmolpilli, which meant "new fire". It was held once every 52 years in order to prevent the world coming to an end.

**Aztec (Nahua) myth How Music Came To The World’**

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| Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl; from ‘How Music Came to the World’ |
| Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl; from ‘How Music Came to the World’ |

**Narrator 1** – **Christian** - One day two gods met on a wild and windy plain. One was Tezcatlipoca, the sky god. The other was Quetzalcoatl, the wind god. They were both very powerful. Sometimes they fought each other. But sometimes, like this time, they helped each other.

**Tezcatlipoca** – **Skye** - ‘What took you so long?’
**Quetzalcoatl**-**’Abraham** - It’s the hurricane season. ‘I’ve been busy. I’ve been whipping up the waves.’
**Tezcatlipoca-** ’ **Skye** This is more important than hurricanes!’
**Quetzalcoatl-** ’ **’Abraham** I’ll be the judge of that,’
**Tezcatlipoca-**’ **Skye** Stop huffing for a moment and listen, ‘What do you hear?’
**Quetzalcoatl** l**istened**. ‘Nothing,’
**Tezcatlipoca-**’ **Skye** Exactly! Nothing! No one sings. No one plays a note. The only sound to be heard is the sound of your roaring. We need to wake up the world, Wind. And I don’t mean hurricanes. We need music!’
**Quetzalcoatl-’Abraham**’ Music?’ ‘What does that have to do with me? I have no music.’
**Tezcatlipoca- Skye**’ I know,’ ‘but I’ll tell you who does have it: the Sun. He surrounds himself with singers and music-makers who play and sing for him all day long, and he won’t share their music with us.’

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| Quetzalcoatl hurls himself into the air; from ‘How Music Came to the World’ |
| Quetzalcoatl hurls himself into the air; from ‘How Music Came to the World’ |

**Quetzalcoatl** -‘**’Abraham** Won’t share?’ ‘That’s not fair.’
**Tezcatlipoca**- **Skye**’I know,’ ‘So listen, Wind. I want you to travel to the House of the Sun. I want you to bring back the best singers and the best musicians. Remember,’ *he said as the wind god unfolded his* wings, ‘we need to wake up the world. We need music!’

**Narrator 2** – **Jeremy** - Quetzalcoatl hurled himself into the air. He flew over land and sea, searching the endless coastline for a single beach. He knew there was only one way he could travel to the House of the Sun. Spying the beach at last, he landed and called out the names of the sky god’s three servants: Cane and Conch, Water Woman, and Water Monster. When they were all before him, he ordered them to make a bridge.

**Narrator 3- Zainab -** The servants grabbed hold of each other. They began to grow tall and thin and to twine together like a rope. They turned into a strong rope bridge that disappeared into the sky. Quetzalcoatl climbed the bridge, following it higher and higher, as the earth grew smaller and smaller below.

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| The Sun cries ‘Stop playing!’ - from ‘How Music Came to the World’ |
| The Sun cries ‘Stop playing!’ - from ‘How Music Came to the World’ |

**Narrator 4: Joseph -** Finally he came to the House of the Sun. He could see its towers shimmering in the distance. Getting to them was not so easy, though. He had to find his way through a maze of streets with high walls. He kept getting lost and going around in circles.
Nearly ready to give up, he heard a beautiful sound that he had never heard before. It was cool and bright. It was sweet and light. It was music.

**Narrator 5: Leah -** Quetzalcoatl followed the sound until it led him out of the maze. Then he saw the musicians in the great courtyard of the Sun. The flute players were dressed in golden yellow. The wandering minstrels wore blue. The lullaby singers were dressed in white, and the singers of love songs wore red.

**Narrator 6: Hassan D.** Suddenly the Sun saw Quetzalcoatl.

**The Sun-Jeremy** ‘Stop playing!’ ‘Stop singing! It’s that terrible wind! Don’t even speak to him, or he will take you back to that silent planet of his!’

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| Quetzalcoatl took the musicians in his arms; from ‘How Music Came to the World’ |
| Quetzalcoatl took the musicians in his arms; from ‘How Music Came to the World’ |

**Narrator 6- Hassan D.** Quetzalcoatl lifted his wings and called

**Quetzalcoatl** -**’Abraham** ‘Musicians! Come with me!’
**Narrator 6: Hassan D.**  None of them said a word. Again the wind god cried out,

**Quetzalcoatl-’Abraham** Singers! Musicians! The Lord of the Sky commands you!’
**Narrator 7:** **Natalia** - The musicians remained silent.
Quetzalcoatl did not like to be ignored. He exploded with anger, like a hundred hurricanes going off at once. Lightning cracked and thunder boomed and clouds swirled around the House of the Sun, turning the daylight into darkness. The wind god roared as if there was no end to his voice. Everything fell down. The Sun flickered like a tiny flame. The musicians ran to the wind and huddled in his lap, trembling with fear.

**Narrator 8: -Zahraa A.** Instantly the wind’s anger passed. The thunder faded and the clouds vanished. Quetzalcoatl took the musicians in his arms and left the House of the Sun, moving through the maze as if it were not there. The wind god was filled with great happiness as he followed the sky bridge back to earth. He felt like a father carrying his children home.

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| All over the earth the musicians wandered, filling the air with music; from ‘How Music Came to the World’  |
| All over the earth the musicians wandered, filling the air with music; from ‘How Music Came to the World’  |

**Narrator 9: Leah -**The earth could also feel that something new was coming - something it needed and had been secretly wishing for. As the wind god came nearer, the earth let out a slow sigh of relief. Its fruit began to ripen and its flowers began to bloom with new, deeper colors. The whole planet seemed to be waking up from a long sleep.
**Narrator 10:Waad** Finally Quetzalcoatl touched down on the earth with the musicians and singers. They looked around curiously at the silent, waiting planet. Then they began to play. Through forests and valleys and deserts and oceans they wandered, filling the air with music.
**Narrator 11:** **Mahdi** - Soon people learned to sing and play, and so did the trees and birds, the whales and wolves, the running streams, the crickets and frogs, and every other creature. From dawn to dusk the melodies spread until music covered the earth. The wind god was pleased. So was the sky god. The musicians were happy with their new home. And ever since that day, the earth as been filled with music.

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| Aztec musicians: detail from a mural by Diego Rivera, National Palace, Mexico City |
| Aztec musicians: detail from a mural by Diego Rivera, National Palace, Mexico City (Click on image to enlarge) |

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