FULFILLMENT
Matthew wrote to Jewish Christians, and he wants to show them how Jesus is the fulfillment of all of the promises and hopes of the Jewish Scriptures. Be on the lookout for when Matthew says Jesus "fulfills" something from the Old Testament or quotes an Old Testament passage.

THE MESSIAH
Through the Old Testament prophets, God promised that Israel would be liberated from oppression by a mysterious military ruler called “the Messiah.” When Jesus was alive, Jewish people had been eagerly waiting for the Messiah’s for over 400 years, and they were anxious for his arrival. Matthew makes it clear in his gospel that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. He just looks a lot different than people expected.

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
Matthew uses this phrase a lot. In the other gospels, the similar phrase "kingdom of God" is used. The kingdom of heaven refers to the rule and reign of God over the whole earth. For Matthew, the reign of God is present in Jesus, and people are invited to join that kingdom by repenting and submitting to him. Pay attention to Matthew’s use of this phrase because the kingdom of heaven will surprise you.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus’ most important sermon in Matthew’s gospel, and in it Jesus describes what it looks like to live as a citizen in his kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount is radical, surprising, and challenging. In it we find a whole new way to live, a whole new way to be human, a whole new way to flourish. The Sermon provides an important lens for reading Matthew, so be on the lookout for how Jesus practices what he preaches.

WORSHIP
Matthew’s gospel begins and ends with scenes of people worshipping Jesus. To Matthew, worship is the goal of his gospel. He wants us to know who Jesus is so that we can worship him too. Make sure to pay attention to how people respond to Jesus and when they worship him as the Messiah.