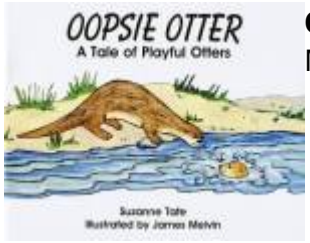
Otter Book Recommendations

Story Time is an essential part of Otter Meetings. Here are favorite books collected from groups around the country:

Books About Otters



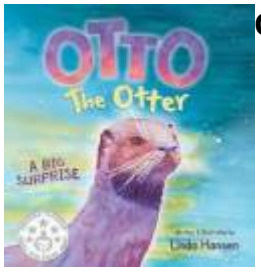
Oopsie Otter: A Tale of Playful Otters by Suzanne Tate, Illustrated by James Melvin

This is a great book for learning some basics about river otters as well as talking about the importance of listening to your leaders and parents. Oopsie loves playing with her best friend Ottie from another Den, but when she is having too much fun to listen to her mom, it lands the young otters in danger.

Otters Love to Play by Jonathan London, Illustrated by Meilo So



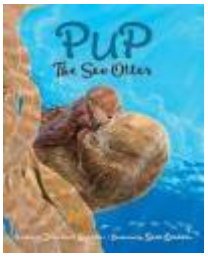
Contains lots of great facts about otters and follows a litter of baby river otters through their first year. Emphasizes otters' playful nature as well as illustrating the changing seasons throughout the year.



Otto the Otter: A Big Surprise by Linda Hansen

Based on a true story about a river otter visiting a family's pond. When Otto brings pups along, it becomes apparent that Otto is actually Opal! Beautiful watercolor illustrations and does a good job of weaving information about otters into a sweet and engaging story. Could also be an opportunity to discuss gender identity in a gentle and age appropriate way.

Pup the Sea Otter by Jonathan London



Covering the first 8 months of a sea otters life, this book is written in lyrical poetry-like prose that will be engaging for younger readers. The kids will enjoy making some otter sounds (“munch crunch munch” and “Eeeeee!”) and following along with the illustrations. A nice way to introduce different types of otters and talk about habitats.

Books Related to Specific Badge Activities

Dear Dragon: A Pen Pal Tale by Josh Funk

This is a great book to read when you are doing the Otter Pen Pal activity! It's very cute and has a message about friendship with people who are different from you and not making assumptions.

Respect and Take Care of Things by Cheri J. Meiners & Meredith Johnson

Good book showing kids taking care of their own things and also touches on environmentalism. This is a good book to introduce taking care of your belongings, and you can brainstorm ways that the kids can help around the house.

Nature & The Environment



Goodbye Summer, Hello Autumn by Kenard Pak

This is one in a series of books about the changing seasons (Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter and Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring are the other titles in the series.) Each is beautifully illustrated and features BIPOC kids out in nature.

The Hike by Alison Farrell

Three friends and their dog enjoy a hike in the woods, where they draw wildlife, spot tracks, see a deer, and finally reach their destination. A joyful love letter to exploring the outdoors.

If You Take Away the Otter by Susannah Buhrman-Deever, Illustrated by Matthew Trueman



This is an accessible and beautifully written account of a trophic cascade, which happens when the removal of a single element affects an entire habitat. Great introduction to the importance of environmental conservation.

The Little Gardener by Emily Hughes

The little gardener's garden means everything to him, and he is trying to do his best to take care of it, but he can't do it all by himself. This is a wonderful message about trying your best and how sometimes you don't know the impact you can have, even if you feel small.



Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner, Illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal

The Over and Under series is a beautiful exploration of the wonders of nature, featuring diverse characters and multiple habitats. Others in the series include Over and Under the Snow, Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt, Over and Under the Rainforest, Over and Under the Canyon, and Over and Under the Waves.

Wonder Walkers by Micha Archer

Two kids embark on a walk and explore the world around them. Presented in a series of questions that encourage kids to come up with their own questions and thoughts about the world. Short and sweet but a great prelude to taking the Otters on their own Wonder Walk.

Social Emotional Learning

Breathe Like a Bear: 30 Mindful Moments for Kids to Feel Calm and Focused Anytime, Anywhere by Kara Willey, Illustrated by Anni Betts

This is not a story book, but contains a number of short mindfulness exercises that are a great way to start a meeting or bring the kids back to being centered after playing a steam off game. A great tool to have in your otter kit!



Can I Play Too? by Mo Willems

One of many great Elephant and Piggie Books, this one is a great illustration of inclusive play! Gerald and Piggie meet a new snake friend who wants to join in a game of catch, but how will he play with no arms? The Elephant and Piggie books also make a great script for an Otter campfire skit.

Do Unto Otters by Laurie Keller



Mr. Rabbit has new neighbors: a family of otters! He's afraid he may not get along with them, but is given the advice “do unto otters as you would have otters do unto you.” A great way to talk about how to get along with others and talk about being a good friend, while still being silly and fun to read.

A House for Everyone by Jo Hirst, Illustrated by Naomi Bardoff

A group of friends gather together to work on building a house together. Each of the has a special job to do and each one expresses their gender identity in a different way. This is a positive book showing kids with a wide variety of gender expressions all getting along and working together to create a home.

The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig, Illustrated by Patrice Barton

Brian feels invisible–he's never included in games or invited to parties by his classmates. When a new kid joins the class, Brian is the first to make him feel welcome, and they become friends. This is a great book to help shyer kids feel included and to talk about making others feel happy through kindness.



Little by Little by Amber Stewart & Layn Marlow

Otto the otter is trying to learn to swim, but it's hard! Luckily his big sister is there to help him overcome his fear and get to splashing with his friends. This is a good book about perseverance and trying your best when it comes to learning new skills.

What If Everybody Did That? by Ellen Javernick, Illustrated by Colleen Madden

This is a good discussion opener for why it's important for us to follow the rules. It's told in a silly way, but

helps kids understand personal accountability and think about the broader implications of their actions.

More Book Suggestions

Guides4Guides has some other book lists compiled by Otter Leaders from around the Country:

Diverse Picture Books for Otters

More Books for Otters

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