The Erstwhile Courier

COMMUNITY EDITION · NO. 46 · STAFF COPY

Courier Club session guide

The Year 1945

Theme: the war's end.


The Erstwhile Courier

JAPAN SIGNS ON THE MISSOURI

ALLIED PRISONERS ARE STILL COMING ABOARD HOSPITAL SHIPS

A city struck by the atomic bomb

Roosevelt dies at 63 before war is won

Fifty nations sign a charter to prevent world war

Europe is free; the war goes on

Red Cross doctor brings medicine to Hiroshima

Inside today

One weekly session, set out ready to run: a welcome script, three stories with conversation starters, a find-it round, a coffee-and-news version, and care pages for the person leading it.

3	20–45	5
stories	minutes to run it	minutes to put the paper out

INSIDE

At a glance	2	Handle with care, for the facilitator	6
The full session	3	What to say, to keep in hand	7
Short session and bedside	5	Read the room, coffee and news, new to the residents	8

AT A GLANCE

Three stories from this week's paper

1

STORY 1

Japan signs on the Missouri

Pages A1, continued on A2

2

STORY 2

Robinson signs with Montreal

Page C1

3

WILDCARD

Thousands in line for nylons

Page D4

PICK YOUR VERSION

20 minutes

Short session

Start here in a nursing home

Page 5

30–45 minutes

Full session

A seated group that likes to talk

Pages 3 and 4

10–15 minutes

1:1 bedside

One reader

Page 5

Read pages 6 and 7 first.

They are for the facilitator only; do not print them on resident materials. Keep page 7 in hand for the opener and the opt-out line to say to the room before the first page. Page 8 has coffee and news and a note for newcomers.

SET UP THE ROOM

- [ ] Read-aloud cards at every seat (18 pt or larger, black on white, matte).
- [ ] Papers on the table, folded to the page being discussed.
- [ ] Good light on the table; no glare on the cards.
- [ ] Speak facing the room; repeat questions and comments from the back.
- [ ] Seats near the front kept for those who find it hard to hear.
- [ ] Reading glasses and magnifiers on hand.
- [ ] Room set so wheelchairs and walkers reach the table.
- [ ] Nobody must move to opt out.
- [ ] A copy of the guide and the log open on your table.

THE FULL SESSION · TABLE TALK

Thirty to forty-five minutes

WELCOME	STORY 1	STORY 2	WILDCARD	FIND-IT	CLOSE
3–5	8–10	8–10	5–8	5	3–5

WELCOME · SAY IT AS WRITTEN

"Welcome to Courier Club. Each week we open one year of the paper together. This week it is 1945. There are no tests and no right answers. You can listen, look or join in. If you want to change the subject, give a thumbs up and we will move to the next question. No one has to move or leave. Papers are on the tables; the read-aloud cards are in front of you."

Starters, not a script. Follow where the talk goes, and stop where it is good, even if time is up.

STORY 1

Japan signs on the Missouri

Pages A1, A2

Read card 1 aloud

World War II is over. On Sept. 2, 1945, Japan signed the surrender aboard the U.S.S. Missouri, a battleship in Tokyo Bay, ending a six-year world war that took about 405,000 American lives. For families, it meant troops in the Pacific could be expected home.

READ ALOUD *For families, it meant the troops in the Pacific could be expected home.*

1 Think of someone in your family or among your friends who was part of this war, at the front or at home. Tell the room about one person.

2 What are you proudest of about them, or what did it cost them?

STORY 2

Robinson signs with Montreal

Page C1

Read card 2 aloud

Black players were barred from the National and American Leagues, baseball's top level, and from the minor leagues below, where players train. On Oct. 23, 1945, Jackie Robinson, a 26-year-old Army veteran from the Black team the Kansas City Monarchs, signed with the Montreal Royals, a Dodgers minor-league team. In 1947 he joined the Dodgers, the first Black player in the National or American League in the 20th century, a step toward ending segregation in sports.

READ ALOUD *He signed in October 1945 and did not reach the Dodgers until 1947.*

1 Who have you known who carried more than their share and kept going? Tell the room about them.

2 What would you want your family to remember about them?

WILDCARD

Thousands in line for nylons

Page D4

Read card 3 aloud

Nylon stockings vanished during the war, when nearly all nylon went into parachutes, tire cords and ropes. In August 1945, soon after Japan surrendered, du Pont said it would make stockings again; when the first small shipments reached the stores in September, people lined up by the thousands, one of the first ordinary comforts to return.

READ ALOUD *In September, people lined up by the thousands for stockings.*

1 What did your family give up during the war?

2 What was the first thing that came back, and who was glad to see it?

Find it in the paper

Find-it · 5 minutes · no score, no tally

1	On the front page, what is the name of the battleship where Japan signed the surrender?	**U.S.S. Missouri**	**A1**
2	How many minutes did the ceremony last?	**23**	**A2**
3	How old is Jack Roosevelt Robinson, and which team did he sign with?	**26; the Montreal Royals**	**C1**
4	Name two things nylon was used for in 1942.	**Any two of: parachutes, tire cords, ropes, shoelaces, mosquito netting, hammocks**	**D4**
5	How many pairs a year has the company forecast?	**360,000,000**	**D4**

Hand out the find-it sheet. Work in pairs or alone; there is no score and no tally.

CLOSE · 3 TO 5 MINUTES

Name one thing you noticed today. Hand out the take-home card. Say when the next session is. Then write down any question a resident asked, word for word and with no names, in the log.

HOW YOU RUN TABLE TALK · 8 TO 10 PEOPLE

You are a moderator who takes part. The prompts are starters, not a script: follow where the talk goes. Listen, ask “Tell me more about him,” link one resident’s story to another’s, and never go round the table.

THE SHORT SESSION

Twenty minutes

The lead version for a nursing home. Plan an hour if you can, and if the talk is good, let it run over rather than cut it off.

2	Welcome (two sentences)
8	Story 1: card 1, both prompts
6	Story 2 or 3: that card, first prompt
4	Close and take-home card

1:1 BEDSIDE

10–15 minutes

Bring one paper and one card. Sit at the reader's eye level, in good light. Offer the card; read it aloud if they prefer. Ask the first prompt, and follow their lead. Leave the take-home card. Stop when they tire.

IF IT STALLS

- Read the card again, slowly.
- Point to a photograph on the page and ask what stands out.
- Ask one pair to find a number on the page.
- Go first yourself with a short answer of your own.

IF IT GETS HEAVY

- Watch for a thumbs up, a turned head or a hand over the eyes, and move to the next question.
- Slow down and lower your voice.
- Say, "That is a lot. We can leave that page."
- Offer a break or a drink of water.
- Move to the nylons story, or to the find-it sheet.
- Tell the nurse or lead on duty if someone is upset after the session.

FACILITATOR ONLY

Handle with care

Do not print this page on resident materials.

HARD TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

- The atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a Red Cross doctor's visit to Hiroshima, and the first atomic test (pages A1, A2); Roosevelt's death (page A1) and funeral (page A3).
- The liberation of the camps, with prisoners still dying (page A3), children freed from Buchenwald (page B4), a starved survivor at Limburg (page D6), artists who died at Belsen (page C6); American prisoners killed at Malmedy and the burning of Dresden (page A3).
- The battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa (page A5); Ernie Pyle's death (pages A5, A7); the sinking of the Indianapolis, where 316 of 1,195 men survived, and her captain's court-martial (page A6); obituaries, including a painter and his grandson killed when a train hit his car (page A7); a flying ace killed testing a jet (page B7); football players killed in combat (page C4).
- Hitler's death, Mussolini's body hung before a crowd, and the Nuremberg trial, where one of the indicted killed himself in prison (page A4); the War Minister's reported suicide (page A2).
- Race and unequal treatment: baseball's color line (page C1); a review of *Black Boy* (page D2); Black veterans often unable to get mortgages (a later note, page D8); quotas on Black students (page C4); the fight for fair hiring and a Nisei veteran refused (page A8).
- Deaths in storms, fires and accidents: tornadoes in Mississippi and Alabama that killed more than 40 (page D6); deadly fires, a trolley collision, a train wreck (page A3), and miners trapped at Pineville (page D8); a bomber that struck the Empire State Building (page D6).

WHO IN THE ROOM MAY BE AFFECTED

Anyone who served, whose family served, or who lost someone in the war, and anyone with family ties to the places and peoples named: Jewish, Filipino, Japanese, German and Black families. You will not know who; plan as if one person in the room is.

THIS SESSION'S STORIES

The surrender story (A1, A2) reports about 250,000 American dead and the War Minister's reported suicide. The Robinson story (C1) is about baseball's color line; the nylons story has no hard topic. Page A1 also carries the bomb and Roosevelt's death.

TERMS TO USE

Use plain words: "the war," "the camps," "the atomic bomb." Say "Black" with a capital; the paper prints "Negro" only inside names, such as the Negro American League. Do not repeat an older word for a people; say "Jews, Romany and others" for the groups held in the camps. Name people as the story names them.

FACILITATOR ONLY

What to say

Say both lines to the whole room before the first page.

A NEUTRAL OPENER

"This paper covers hard parts of 1945 as well as hopeful ones. You can pass on any page with a thumbs up, listen quietly, or rest your eyes. No one has to move."

THE OPT-OUT LINE

"If a page is not for you today, that is fine. Give a thumbs up and we will move on, or just listen, or turn to the find-it sheet if you like. You do not need to leave, move or tell anyone why."

Say it once to the whole room before the first page and again before any page on the hard-topics list (page 6). Show the thumbs up as you say it. Never ask anyone in front of the group if they are all right, and do not look toward or name the person who passes. If someone wants to leave, help them quietly; never suggest it as the way to opt out.

IF SOMEONE SHARES A STORY OF THEIR OWN

Listen first. Thank them without grading the story, and do not press for detail they did not offer. Link one resident's story to another's, and do not go round the table. Never probe a loss.

- *"Tell me more about him."*
- *"What was she like?"*
- *"What did that look like at your house?"*
- *"[Name], did it go that way for your family?"*

ADJUSTING FOR YOUR ROOM

This guide is written for a group that likes to talk. Versions set for assisted living and for memory care use short spoken starters, with nothing to fill in and no worksheet. Write to support@erstwhilecourier.com and we will send the one for your room.

FOR THE PERSON LEADING

Read the room, and two shorter ways in

WATCH AS WELL AS LISTEN

Not everyone can say how they feel, and some will not. Watch faces, posture and hands as well as words. A tightened face, a turned head or a hand over the eyes means slow down or move to the next question; do not wait for a thumbs up. Let people say what they want to say, and do not read anyone's feelings aloud to the room.

INVITE QUIETER RESIDENTS, WITHOUT PRESSURE

Offer the card or the paper to someone who has not spoken, look their way and then back to the room, and take a nod, a smile or silence as joining in. Never go round the table or ask someone by name to answer. Listening is taking part.

COFFEE AND NEWS

10 minutes

Many buildings already have a morning coffee or news hour. Put one paper on the table and read one card aloud, then ask its first prompt and follow where the talk goes. If it is going well, let it grow into the short session.

1 min	Welcome in one sentence, and show the thumbs up
6 min	One card read aloud, its first prompt
3 min	Say when the full session is; leave the paper out

NEW TO THE RESIDENTS? FOR NEW STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

You do not need to share anyone's age or past to start; the paper is what you have in common.

- Read the context note and one card the day before; five minutes is enough.
- Read the card aloud, ask the first prompt, listen, and say back what you heard.
- You do not need to know the history. Say, "Tell me more."
- Thank them for what they share. Write down one thing you learned, with no names, in the log.