

LESSON PLAN

The Circle

Learn the story of Mildred Fish Harnack, a Milwaukee-born woman famous for her role in the underground resistance in Germany. Mildred was the only American civilian killed on the direct order of Hitler.

 30-60 min  Grades 5-8

DOMAIN
Responsibility

SUBJECT
Individual Roles

TOPIC
Upstanders

Enduring Understanding

Some people risked their lives to speak out against Nazi ideology.

Essential Questions

1. How does one combat harmful ideology?
2. In what way can education encourage people to become free thinkers?

Readiness

 10 min

Begin by asking your students, how far would you go to stand up for what you believe in?

Input

 20 min

Read through [this resource](#) on Mildred Fish Harnack as a class.

Explain that neither Mildred nor Arvid were Jewish or deemed “undesirable” by Hitler’s standards. To the contrary, Arvid was employed by the government and was considered to fit the mold of the ideal Aryan. Despite not being affected by discriminatory policies imposed by the Third Reich, Mildred and Arvid went to great lengths to oppose Nazi ideology.

Output

 15 min

In pairs or small groups, have the class answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think Mildred wasn’t swayed by Nazi propaganda?
2. Why do you think Mildred risked her life to denounce Hitler and Nazi ideology?
3. How can education help combat hateful propaganda?
4. What is your biggest takeaway from learning about Mildred Harnack?

Teacher Tip:

Mildred Harnack was executed for her role in the resistance as well as for her political views. Mildred and her husband were both communists. You may want to take time in this lesson to discuss the reasons why other groups were targeted by the Nazis.