**SCENARIO**

**Zero Waste in the Kitchen**

Don’t Waste, Utilize – Zero Waste in the Kitchen

Nowadays, the pace at which we produce, buy, and then discard items, including food, significantly harms our environment. The main goal of a zero waste lifestyle is to avoid waste. Every day, the kitchen generates a lot of scraps while preparing meals. Much food is also wasted due to spoilage because we buy more than we can use, and a lot of food ends up in the trash.

**T:** Why do you think so much food is wasted nowadays?

Students answer.

**T:** supplements their responses:

Food producers aim for maximum profits, while advertisements make us, the consumers, want more and more. We are accustomed to having refrigerators and kitchen cabinets bursting with food products. On the other hand, we often waste food because we do not know or do not want to read the information on product labels. If we don't pay attention to expiration dates, it's almost certain that we regularly throw away expired products. We also lack knowledge on how to use food scraps, often related to a lack of culinary skills—learning to cook is valuable at any age!

To implement the zero waste approach, it’s important to understand its main principles. Look at the graphic:

1. **Refuse** – Refuse single-use packaging, single-use flyers, and other products harmful to the environment, which will become waste and pollution.
2. **Reduce** – Reduce the number of items/food products, buy only what you truly consider necessary.
3. **Reuse** – Do not use single-use solutions. Use reusable packaging. Take meals to school in glass or plastic lunchboxes and a good-quality thermos for water.
4. **Recycle** – Sort waste (paper can be recycled up to 6 times) and take it to appropriate points, recycle what you can at home (for example, make a shopping bag from an old sheet).
5. **Rot** – Compost organic waste to obtain energy or natural fertilizer.

**Now, let’s do an exercise – the 5R rule in practice!**

**CLASS EXERCISE – ON THE PLATFORM AND ON PAPER FOR IN-PERSON CLASS**

Connect matching solutions to the respective area of daily life. In person – write the matching symbol

* Z – shopping
* G – cooking
* P – storage

On the platform – connect the matching elements

* Z **PLANNING SHOPPING – SHOPPING LIST**
* Z **REUSABLE SHOPPING BAG**
* P **CHECKING FRIDGE AND PANTRY**
* Z/G **MENU PLANNING**
* G **MAKING DISHES FROM THE OLDEST PURCHASED PRODUCTS**
* Z **READING LABELS FOR EXPIRATION DATES AND STORAGE CONDITIONS**
* G **THIN PEELING OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS**
* G **PREPARING DISHES FROM PRODUCTS WE USED TO THROW AWAY (E.G., VEGETABLES FROM BROTH)**
* P **CONTAINERS, E.G., ICE CREAM BOXES USED FOR FOOD STORAGE**
* G/Z/P **INCLUDE LONG-SHELF-LIFE PRODUCTS LIKE CANNED FOOD AND FROZEN FOODS IN THE MENU**
* P **PROPER FRIDGE ORGANIZATION – PLACE LONGER-LIFE PRODUCTS FURTHER/BACK AND THOSE TO BE CONSUMED SOON AT EYE LEVEL**

**Was the task difficult? Do you apply any of the 5R principles in your life? If not, which one seems easy to implement and are you ready to start it immediately?**

Let’s go back for a moment to the information on food packaging labels! It’s important to learn to distinguish between the "best before" date and the "use by" date.

* **Best before** – indicated on the label as "best before / before end" tells us that the product retains all its properties like appearance, taste, and smell until the given date, but after that date, these features may be less intense. However, it can still be used in the kitchen if stored properly. You’ll often find storage instructions on such products’ packaging. For example, "store in a dry place."
* These include so-called dry products, such as legumes, cereals, flours, pasta, as well as frozen foods and canned goods.
* **Use by** – indicated by "use by" is a safety indicator for perishable products. After the indicated date, the product should not be consumed due to the risk of food poisoning, which can cause stomach aches, vomiting, and diarrhea. This applies to products like fish, meat, milk, yogurts, and spreadable cheeses. In short, "wet" products containing a significant amount of water that spoil easily.

Practicing zero waste in the kitchen is not difficult. It certainly requires creative thinking and a bit of culinary skill. Children your age surely have plenty of imagination, and to make a dish, we can always ask someone more experienced.

Can you think of a dish that can be made from leftover fruits and vegetables or products forgotten in the fridge?

**Students respond.**

T supplements their responses.

When buying vegetables by weight, we often tend to put more in the basket than we need. Without precise shopping plans, we buy more than we can use – for example, buying ingredients for soup, we often take more root vegetables like carrots, celery, or parsley than necessary. Worse, we pack each product in a separate plastic bag. It's worth breaking these habits, but if you do end up buying too many vegetables, you can make various vegetable pancakes, which can be fried with a bit of oil or baked in the oven on a baking tray lined with parchment paper. An example is zucchini and carrot pancakes, where ingredients can be freely changed. Add whatever needs to be used up and saved from waste.

**Recipe** **“RECYCLING” PANCAKES!**

**RECIPE 1**

Zucchini and Carrot Pancakes with Greek-style Cheese

Optional substitutes and additions – e.g., finely chopped onion, garlic, canned corn/beans; instead of or in addition to carrots, use celery or parsley root. Any yellow or salad cheese can be used instead of Greek cheese.

Ingredients:

* 1 medium zucchini
* ½ onion – e.g., red onion
* 1 small carrot
* 2 garlic cloves
* 2 eggs
* 3 heaping tablespoons of flour
* About 100 g of cheese
* Pepper and salt to taste

**Instructions:** Grate the zucchini and carrot on a large-hole grater, sprinkle with a teaspoon of salt, and set aside for about 20 minutes. After that, squeeze the vegetables to remove excess water and add flour, eggs, chopped onion, pressed garlic, and salt and pepper. Finally, add crumbled or diced cheese and mix everything thoroughly. Heat oil in a pan and fry the pancakes until golden brown. Oven option – form pancakes on a baking tray lined with parchment paper and bake for about half an hour (turn the pancakes halfway through) at 200 degrees Celsius.

**RECIPE 2**

Celery or Other Root Vegetable Pancakes

Ingredients:

* A piece of celery
* A piece of carrot
* A piece of onion
* 1 egg
* 2-3 tablespoons of flour
* Salt, pepper, and herbs, e.g., paprika and dried garlic
* A bit of oil/olive oil for frying

**Instructions:** Grate the washed vegetables on a large-hole grater, add the egg, flour, and spices. Mix all ingredients thoroughly. Heat oil in a pan and spoon the batter onto the pan, frying the pancakes until golden brown on both sides. If you feel you used too much oil, place the pancakes on a plate lined with paper towels to absorb some of the oil. Serve with a sauce, for example, made from natural yogurt with a bit of mayonnaise or cream, seasoned with curry powder, herbal pepper, and a pinch of sugar!

* In person – you will find the pancake recipes in the homework assignment.

This task is not just about cooking based on the recipe but also about demonstrating your creativity! Suggestions for additions that will help you use up pantry leftovers are welcome. If you had salad or homemade pizza for dinner yesterday, perhaps there is leftover corn and cheese, which are perfect for zucchini pancakes. Raw vegetable leftovers, such as carrots, parsley, onions, or leftover garlic, are great for making celery pancakes. Yogurt-based dips with a bit of mayonnaise or cream, often left open and unfinished at the bottom of the fridge, are excellent for any pancakes.

If you don’t feel like preparing any of these suggestions, create something entirely of your own! Perhaps you’ll use vegetables from the soup stock to make a spread for bread or a sauce for pasta? Discuss your vision with your classmates! Maybe on the next homeroom lesson, you’ll organize a zero waste feast with tastings!