People tend to complain and grumble about teenagers who have no manners, no values, spend all their time on cell phones, and just don't "do things the way they used to." Teens often get a bad reputation in today's world, but a group of young men and women from the Lansing Diocese in Michigan set out to prove all the naysayers wrong. These teens stepped away from their busy lives to be trained on street evangelization by an organization known as St. Paul Street Evangelization and then spent three days in Flint, Michigan putting into action everything they learned.

Flint was once a booming city, home to several General Motors' factories, but it has fallen on hard times and is now better known for its high rate of crime. Needless to say, in this town where unemployment, poverty, crime and violence predominate, many Flint residents suffer from hardened hearts.

So it was into this setting, one so desperate for hope, that these courageous teens ventured out into the streets to witness to the mercy of God's unfailing love. Sure enough, amazing transformations took place, both in the teen evangelists and the people they encountered. Read the quotes below from these inspiring young people… they truly teach us what we need to keep in mind when evangelizing.

When Evangelizing remember to…

1. Have hope for all people – "Some people were so happy and accepting while we were talking to them. Being able to see other listen to the message of Christ gives me hope." – Jason

2. Listen for the voice of God – "I heard God's voice through others speaking to me. He answered my questions, but I didn't receive the answers I wanted. I saw God's mercy – through us He gave the people of Flint a second chance. " – Joseph

"The most growth I had was during adoration. God really spoke and He answered my questions". Rachel

3. See the face of God in others – "I saw God in every homeless person, poor person, and every person that talked to us". – Thomas

4. Be bold in your faith – "Be fearless, and remember that all you need to do is plant a seed. It's God's job to be the Gardener." – Joseph

5. Completely surrender your will to God's will – "I surrendered my entire life to fully commit to living for Jesus. I had been seeking Jesus for awhile, but doing this [evangelization] inspired me to give Him everything." – Samuel

6. Trust that God will provide the words – "I would tell other teens who want to share their faith to just be confident and not scared by what people might say. Just pray to God to give you the words." – Hannah

7. Remember the call to spread the Gospel. – "People are searching for help… aching in their hearts. We as Christians need to help others find Jesus. Some people need to hear others encouragements to come to God to actually do it. Trust in the Lord. It's not about you but about the people who need to find the Lord. " – Emma

We are called to bring the light of Christ to the world. There are many different ways to do this, but evangelizing is a beautiful and powerful way to spread God's love and fulfil our call to be light to the nations! I was able to see God in each person we encountered. It is often so hard to see Jesus in the people surrounding us, but actually talking and interacting with the people of Flint helped me to see Jesus in "the poorest of the poor. Maddie

8. Overcome your weaknesses through prayer – "In the past, I've been struggling with wanting to be perfect and despairing over the fact that I would never be perfect: We are called to bring the light of Christ to the world. There are many different ways to do this, but evangelizing is a beautiful and powerful way to spread God's love and fulfil our call to be light to the nations! I was able to see God in each person we encountered. It is often so hard to see Jesus in the people surrounding us, but actually talking and interacting with the people of Flint helped me to see Jesus in "the poorest of the poor. Through prayer and reaching out to others, I have learned that I won't be perfect in my own sense of perfect, but I can be perfect in the way God made me as myself." – Maddiee

9. Be ready to share your own story of how God has worked in your life – "One of the best ways to spread the word of God is to speak it. Share your personal experiences and tell/show people how God has worked miracles in YOU!" – Jillian

10. Forgive others that have hurt you. – "God helped me to forgive people who have hurt me which brought me closer to Him. His neverending love allowed me to forgive them." – Anonymous

1**1. Remember your blessings. –** “Through this week, I have seen how blessed I am. I was fortunate enough to be able share my faith with others and plants seeds in others lives. Not only did they grow in their faith, but their witness grew mine. The desire for truth in people was amazing to see. So many people are without the Good news. It is only our duty to share it with others.” – Savannah

12. Be the Light in the darkness – “People are broken and are looking for any shred of hope most of the time. Seeing us out there smiling gives people hope (so they told us!). We saw peoples faces light up when we offered them a rosary or asked them to pray with us”. – Page

13. Remember God’s love for all of humanity –

There is no such thing as relying too much on God. He wants to be with you so badly. he is obsessed with you. If you ask Him for anything; for His strength, His courage, His wisdom, His love – he knows what you need and He will give it to you. Never be afraid. David

If these quotes inspired you to get out there and evangelize, check out the resources that St. Paul Street Evangelization has to offer. They may already have a team in your area you can join. Let the work of these teens inspire you to share the Good News with others today.