



High School Seniors, Ashton Stovall, left, and Sabrina Pratt are active in Centenary's Youth program.

Testimonials Are Us Centenary Youth Share Why "Church" is Important to Them.

Nothing renews the spirit more than talking to Centenary's Youth. If you haven't had a chance to sit and talk with one of our teenagers, you ought to do so soon. You are in for a treat. You might want to start with two friends who feel they have grown-up in Centenary, Sabrina Pratt and Ashton Stovall.

The two, 17-year-old high school seniors, are busy ladies who make sure their schedules include time for church, and especially time for Jesus. Both seniors are looking to college and have been accepted by Murray University, but are keeping their college options open.

Sabrina attends Collins, was formerly in cross country, but now focuses on National Honor Society, Link Crew, and service projects that include mentoring 8th graders, community service water which raises funds for water treatment plants in third world countries from the sale of old shoes. Her rigorous courses demand a lot of her time, which may be one reason Sabrina says "I do school". After high school, Sabrina wants to study psychology, focusing on children.

Ashton does school, too, but she also works at Zaxby's after school, about 30 hours per week. She loves music and is in the Shelby County High Choir. Ashton's time flies with school studies, work and Centenary youth activities. She would like her future college studies to lead her to a career in social work with children.



With such busy schedules why make time for Centenary Youth activities? Ashton says it helps her "attitude. When I'm more involved, I feel more positive. My whole attitude is nicer." Ashton also attributes youth involvement with being able to "keep you out of the wrong crowd. Help keep you in line.

Sabrina says by "growing up with everyone we are with now, we are the (youth) leaders now. We are able to work on our leadership skills by helping to plan activities including the future mission trip to the Dominican Republic." Ashton and Sabrina are pleased to be a part of a close network of friends that share in the leadership roles including Connor Goodwin, Katie Hisle, Jordan Knipp, Kristen Suter and others. They also miss friends who are now attending other churches, but as Ashton says, "we're happy they are in a church and making new friends".

Ashton reveals her passion for the Lord and music when she announces she really "likes the worship during youth. Everybody gets excited and is so happy. I love the music. You look around and see everyone is into it. Worship changes the tone of the whole room. Music reminds me why we are there. We think about what we are singing and who we are singing for."



Sabrina sees other pluses in growing up in youth as they are now able to participate in other mission projects like helping with building the ramps, planning the fall retreat, pair discussion groups, and lead discussions. One thing Sabrina has learned through youth programming and Bible scripture is "not to get in the comparison trap. We should not use our standards to compare ourselves to others, but God's." Sabrina finds comfort in Song of Solomon 4:7. "As a teenage girl I look in the mirror sometimes (making a little disappointed face) and I shouldn't frame myself in what others see. In God's eyes, I am perfect.

Ashton adds, "you need to make sure to love your youth (being young) . . . It really has flown by." Coming from a sage of 17, it is comforting to know teens who appreciate where they are in life's stages and should not be surprised when they say things like, "We are thankful for our church supporting the youth. The church family is there for me. It makes me feel loved....Like I can actually do something, achieve something. Look how the church has supported our mission trip to the Dominican Republic (DR). We were going to have to raise \$1,000 each to go. Now we can go for \$500 per person."

Sabrina and Ashton are learning their DR mission trip verse to help set the spirit of the trip and looking forward to meeting the other requirements to be eligible to go next summer including the two-page essay on why they want to go. Sabrina and Ashton have also been blessed by serving at Aldersgate Camp. Both had attended Aldersgate as campers over the years, but this past summer they volunteered to work with the counselors. In particular Lindsay Tripp. Sabrina and Ashton echoed their praise of Lindsay, "she is a huge role model" They also gave a large vote of approval for Lindsay's fiancé, Tim Olson. "They are so perfect . . . a really sweet couple. . .We really better get an invitation to their wedding."

Sabrina and Ashton have other adults they appreciate as role models. Sabrina says even though she does not get to see "Melissa Goodlett as much now, I know she'd be there for me if I needed her." Ashton says about her neighbor who lives across the street, "My Grandmother (Pauletta Stovall) is my best friend." Ashton acknowledges her grandmother is a pretty good cook but that's not why she loves being with her. "We love to talk, all we have the time to."

Thank you, Ashton and Sabrina. It has been a joy to get to know you better. You are exceptional young women. Thank you for your love of Centenary and your faith in our savior, Jesus Christ.