

Students serve church plants through Bounce

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Middle and high school students give a week of their summer vacation learning about and serving church plants through Bounce Student Church Planting.

Seattle and Houston are two drastically different locations that share a distinct need for churches. Meeting that need are church planters who recognize the importance of Christ's Great Commission and are taking action.

Bounce—a ministry of Texas Baptists—wants to raise awareness about church planting and help church plants follow the Great Commission. Founded in 2013, Bounce mobilizes middle school and high school students to participate in missions.

The organization began with disaster recovery efforts. Now, Bounce also is deploying students to help with church planting.

This summer, students and their adult sponsors from churches all over Texas and one church in Albuquerque, N.M., spent a week of their summer vacation helping church planters and their congregations in Houston, Texas and Seattle.

Teams helped church plants with outreach events

The Bounce groups acted as an extension of the church plants, most of whom lack the means to do large community outreach events.



A volunteer with a Bounce Student Church Planting team hangs on flyer on a door. (Photo courtesy of Bounce)

Students visited neighborhoods, passing out flyers to inform residents about area church plants and community outreach events the church plants were hosting.

The groups helped church plants put on day camps to minister to children from the community. They hosted block parties and barbecues to help church planters interact with neighbors. They also participated in and, in some cases, helped lead the church plants' weekly worship services.

Pastor Reid Rothenberger with Grace Village Church in New Caney, north of Houston, said the Bounce group serving his church did "a little bit of everything" during their week on mission.

"There's so many things that we couldn't do if we didn't have a large amount of labor coming in for a short period of time that are specifically here to help do outreach that will grow our church in ways that it could not have grown if a Bounce team had not come," Reid said.



Weston Forman from Meadowbrook Baptist Church in Robinson, a Bounce Student Church Planting volunteer, distributes food outside a public swimming pool. (Photo courtesy of Bounce)

At Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church in Manvel, south of Houston, a Bounce team from Albuquerque worked on the church's facilities. Pastor Ed Fleming said the Bounce group's work would better the church's ability to do ministry and to reach the community.

In Seattle, the Bounce teams' work was similar to the work done in the Houston area. Tim Howe, church planting catalyst for the Northwest Baptist Convention, said that the Bounce teams visiting Seattle help to "extend" or "accelerate" the ministries of church plants.

A Bounce team from First Baptist Church in Mineral Wells helped Table of Hope Church in Puyallup, Wash., lead a sports and art camp for children in the community. Table of Hope Pastor Tyler Clark said the Bounce group's support enhanced his church's ability to build relationships with community members.

"It's been hugely encouraging to be able to have partners in the ministry to walk together, arm and arm, to be able to outreach and love on our community," Clark said.

Student volunteer team energizes church planters

Pastor Stephen Searles at The Pointe Church in Federal Way, Wash., said church planting can be difficult work and can leave church planters and their congregations feeling lonely. Searles said the visiting Bounce teams provide encouragement.

“When a team comes up, they just energize you,” Searles said. “They remind you that you’re not alone. They tell our people that they’re not alone.”

The impact of Bounce Student Church Planting goes beyond supporting church plants. Through their week on mission, participants in Bounce are exposed to the world of church planting.

Emma Carter is a Bounce student participant from Meadowbrook Baptist Church in Robinson. Carter said that her Bounce Student Church Planting experience allowed her to discover church planting.

“I’ve grown up in the same church my whole life,” Carter said. “So, I guess I never really thought about like, ‘Hey, there’s churches that are started like just now, and they’re just now growing.’”

Weston Furman, another Bounce student participant from Meadowbrook Baptist Church, said his experience showed him how much he could support church plants with simple actions.

“One [thing] that’s really stuck out to me is how important small details are,” Furman said, “Even though it seems like you’re not doing too much, it can have a really big impact on a lot of people and help grow churches.”

Church Planting Catalyst Tim Howe said that he wants the students to

realize they can greatly help church plants. Howe said he wants the students to come away with a “burden” for the lost and would like to see some of these Bounce participants return to Seattle or go to other areas to spread the gospel.

Much work was accomplished this summer through Bounce Student Church Planting, he noted. The long-term impact remains to be seen, but the groups who have participated have seen God work.

Whether in Seattle or Houston, the goal of Bounce Student Church Planting is to get young people excited about how God is using church planting to grow his kingdom and to allow students to help church planters in a real and impactful way.

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