

## COUNTING MY BLESSINGS

God fills our ministries and lives with many blessings. These are just some of the blessings I'm grateful for:

**1 Community**—The people I serve with aren't just my ministry team; they're part of my family. We celebrate life together, share our struggles, and pray and care for one another within and outside the church. With my ministry family, I'm safe to be myself. These people accept, love, and value me for all that I am—and even all that I'm not.

**2 Laughs**—There's nothing better than sitting around a table with a bunch of young people laughing at silly jokes, sharing good news, sighing with relief, enjoying a gag or prank, and so on. All those things fill me with joy because laughter is the sound of hope.

**3 Change**—I can't stand the same old, run-of-the-mill routines. For me, change isn't a bonus but a necessity. Without it, I become bored and discouraged. I thrive on having the flexibility to introduce variety and new ideas. Though much of our ministry's structure remains constant, we have the freedom to change things up so they don't become stale.

**4 ADHD**—Yep, I'm grateful for my "deficit." Although focusing can be difficult for me, there's much to be said for ADHD. Because I know what I'm good at and because I accept (and communicate) what I'm not so good at, people afford me the luxury of creativity and tolerance. Yet they also know to keep me accountable for the stuff that really matters. Plus, youth ministry is a great outlet for all my bottled-up energy. I can even handle lock-ins without a Red Bull overdose and caffeine crash.

**5 Challenge**—If I'm not challenged, I lose interest. Maybe my ADHD is to blame. Thankfully, leading a thriving, sustainable youth ministry is filled with plenty of challenges: challenging volunteers, challenging parents, challenging bosses, and challenging teenagers. But they all make this work interesting—and well-worth the sacrifices. ●



MELISSA is a longtime youth pastor in New York City, and she's a member of the "In the Trenches Team" for our Simply Youth Ministry Conference.

### FAVORITES

**Movie:** *Memphis Belle*

**App:** Bejeweled Blitz

**Card Game:** Texas Hold 'Em

**Color:** Orange



I'm jealous. Melissa's hair style changes in every single photo.

