Number Puzzle

Introductory Talk

Begin writing the number one through thirty-six on the board, six to a row, then draw the lines on the right-hand side. Use colors other than yellow and black for the numbers and lines. Turn to the crowd, greet them, and tell them you have a mathematical problem for them to do. Explain that you want them to give you six numbers from one to thity-six, and at the end you will add up their numbers. BUT, before you begin you predict that the answer will be 111, and write that number in the space at the bottom-right. Tell them that you will apply a simple mathematical principle as you go through the puzzle.

Choose a person near the back of the crowd to give you a number. Circle the number, and write it in the right-hand column. At this point, you will explain the mathematical principle you will be using; cross out all the numbers vertically in the same column and horizontally in the same row as the number chosen. Now ask for another number. After the third number has been chosen, explain the whole puzzle again for those who have just arrived. Also say:

1. The puzzle works because God made the mathematical principle or law.
2. Just as there is only one answer to this problem, there is only one answer to life's greatest problem.
3. Underneath this sheet of paper, we have another illustration that will show you this answer: God's answer.

After the sixth and last number is given, add them up with the crowd: "8 and 2 are 10, and six is 16, etc.... equals. . . 111, just as predicted!" Remind them that it works because God made the rules and God's rules for life are always true and certain. At this point, you want to take the puzzle off the board to reveal the prepared sketchboard message and transition into it as smoothly as possible.