A Night to Remember – God Winks – by Marcy Lytle

I think this is the tenth year I've now written a family devo to go with the month of love, February. God's love is paramount for our kids to know. The love of their family is the best for our kids to feel. True love and what it looks like is so important for our kids to learn. But so is love for the simple things in life, like dogs and candy. So here it is, a simple look at the lovely things in the month of love with your family and kiddos…and we'll call them *winks* from God.

Preparation: Hand your kids a list of three questions and if they're too little to read, then just ask them – What is your favorite candy? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite book or show? Collect their answers (you can include the parents too if you wish!). For a Valentine's party of sorts, purchase their candies, try to find a stuffed animal for each (or even just a small bag of varied animals for fun from the Dollar Tree), and research a character or quote from their shows.

Call the family together for a night to remember…

Isn't it fun to learn to wink? How does it make you feel when Mom or Dad give you a little wink? A wink can be given across the room to signal affection and love, so that no one else sees but you!

We know that God loved us first because he gave us his only son, Jesus. That's the purest form of love. And that's the biggest wink of all!

We love each other as a family because of God's love for us, with forgiveness and acts of kindness and hugs. Let's practice winking at each other, now.

We love God and ourselves enough to love others well, too, because loving others is the best gift to give! Acts of kindness are winks, as well.

But did you know that God loves to give us little "winks" of love daily, as we go to school, play in our yards, or get a snack at a drive-through? It's true. God cares about every detail of our lives, even the amount of hairs on our heads!

- Hand each person their favorite candy.

How do you feel when you're allowed to eat your favorite sweet? It's only special because it's a treat. Sweets on a daily basis all day long would make us sick. But sweet treats, like winks, on occasion make us clap for joy!

God's Word reminds us of his big winks:

1. For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you." Isaiah 41:13 God cares when we are scared and offers his hand.
2. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Psalm 32.8 God cares when we are lost and shows us the way.
3. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. *He makes me lie down in green pastures.* He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of

righteousness for his name's sake. Psalm 23.1-3 He gives us water when we are thirsty and rest when we are tired.

4. When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34.17-18. He knows when we're in trouble and hears our cries.
5. A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18.24. His name is Jesus!

- Hand out the animals (either a stuffed one for each, or a pack of little animals to open and share). God made all the animals and let man name them, and lets us enjoy them. What fun winks!

Valentine's Day is a day where we celebrate God winks and family winks and friend winks and sibling winks. Little acts of kindness that make us feel big arms of warmth and hugs. And sometimes we just enjoy chilling and watching and snuggling under a blanket to watch something that makes us feel happy.

- Share quotes or characters from favorite movies.

Let's snuggle now and watch something new and enjoy all the winks of love this Valentine's Day! Thank you God for all the big winks and small winks, that send us love from above.

Watch a movie together (Encanto might be a good pick!) And end the night with hugs for all!