

## Joseph's life and interaction with his family teach us several lessons on how to talk to people

While we tend to think of Joseph as a heroic figure in the Bible, his life doesn't start that way. This seventeen-year-old inexperienced boy was a pain to his brothers. His father, Jacob, loved Joseph more than all his other sons. And to his discredit, Jacob demonstrated that favoritism. Jacob gave Joseph an expensive multicolored coat. Joseph's brothers hated him.

Joseph had dreams, and in each one it turns out that he's at the center, shining with importance. Having a dream is one thing, but telling it to your brothers is another thing, especially when you know it's going to make them even more jealous. Joseph was naïve because he related his dreams to his brothers with great joy. Joseph even succeeded in getting his father angry at him. "Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" Jacob asks in anger (Genesis 37:10).

The brothers finally get their chance for revenge when Jacob sends Joseph to check on his older brothers, who are away with the flocks. They plan to kill Joseph and make it look like the work of a wild animal. Interestingly, the oldest brother, Reuben, wants to spare Joseph's life and bring him back home. So, the brothers take Joseph, remove his expensive robe, and throw him into a deep cistern. After some heated discussion, they decided that, instead of killing him, they will sell him into slavery.

This prideful, inexperienced boy's life has a lot of lessons to offer us. Many of us deal with the same injustices, betrayals, lies, and misfortunes he was faced with. Sad to say, like Joseph, many times the things we face come from within our family and from loved ones.

What exactly can we learn from the drama of this dysfunctional family? What can we learn from Joseph about how we should and should not use our words when dealing with family, friends, and other significant people in our lives? Here are several suggestions.

*To be continued next week*