

NPM Basic Cantor Certificate: FAQs

- 1. What is the BCC?** The BCC is a certificate that acknowledges that the candidate has fulfilled the minimum requirements for serving as a competent cantor. That is, leading psalms and litanies, and demonstrating basic knowledge about music, the liturgy, and the role of the cantor. It is also the first and essential step toward the two more advanced certificates, the Intermediate Cantor Certificate and the Cantor Colleague Certificate.
- 2. Why do I need the BCC?** The BCC is a spiritual journey as well as a learning experience. It is hoped that the candidate receives encouraging feedback and assistance as they grow continually, improving their skills and deepening spirituality. Cantors have found the certificate valuable as they move from place to place around the country, and useful when they are faced with quantifying their liturgical expertise for a parish where their skill level is unknown. It helps the resident music director and/or pastor determine that the cantor has a competent level of understanding of music and liturgy compared to other cantors in the nation with the (BCC) certification.
- 3. What exactly is included in the exam?** The exam is in two parts, written and vocal testing. *See the BCC application and information form for complete details.*
 - a.** The vocal testing consists of the singing two psalms, one chant style and one melodic style, from the approved lists on the application form. Additionally, a *Kyrie*, including any invocations attached to the setting, and a setting of the *Lamb of God* should both be done as litanies. Pitch matching exercises include three sets of intervals played on the piano or organ that the candidate is required to sing back accurately. All portions of the vocal testing and must be recorded for adjudication.
 - b.** The written exam is a series of questions dealing with musical knowledge and the liturgy, as well as questions from *Sing to the Lord* dealing with the role of the cantor.

*** A passing score of 70% or higher must be achieved on each element: the written exam, the questions on Sing to the Lord, and the vocal portions of the exam. ***
- 4. May I transpose the music for the psalms and/or litanies?** Transposing the published settings is *not* encouraged. However, if a cantor chooses to do so, the cantor and the proctor should inform the BCC administrator of the plan so that the adjudicators may be informed of that change.
- 5. What do I need to know to pass the written exam?** There are questions in the written portion from the liturgical document *Sing to the Lord* (which may be found on the www.npm.org website) along with a test of basic musical knowledge. The liturgy section of the test will be easy to pass if you attend Mass weekly.
- 6. Who are the adjudicators?** The adjudicators are current and former members of the Steering Committee for Cantors and other nationally- and regionally-known cantors.
- 7. Is there a cost for this exam?** The exam requires a non-refundable \$25 application fee to be paid to the NPM National Office.
- 8. Is there a specific amount of time to complete this process?** You have one year to complete all portions of this certificate.
- 9. What if I do not pass a portion of the exam?** You may retake any portion of the examination that you did not receive a score 70% or higher within one year of application. Most often when a person has difficulty with a section of the certification, a local mentor is suggested to assist candidate before he re-examination is completed.
- 10. Who may I talk to if I still have questions?** Please contact Rosemarie Gondek with any additional questions. Phone 561-414-4694; e-mail rosemarie.gondek@gmail.com