

NPM Basic Cantor Certificate: Tips

SELF ASSESSMENT TIPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE

Here are some suggestions to help you assess your skills as you prepare for the Basic Cantor Certificate (BCC).

As you lead Psalms and Litanies, consider:

- How does my voice help the assembly to pray? How might it distract?
- Do I annunciate clearly so that the text is understood?
- Do I accurately match pitch, or do I need to devote additional attention to that skill?
- Do I sing note values and rhythms correctly, or am I often out of sync with the music?
- How well do the music director or accompanist and I communicate both within and outside of liturgy?
- Do I sing the chant-style Psalms with pacing similar to speech or do I sing it mechanically or with an artificial rhythm imposed on it?
- Do I understand the texts that I am singing? How well do I communicate those texts?
- Is my face active when I sing, or am I expressionless (or too animated)?
- How, and how often, do I make eye contact with people when I sing?
- How do my gestures invite and engage the assembly? How might they distract?
- How is my entire body engaged when I sing?
- How does my leadership animate the whole assembly's prayer? How might it withdraw energy from it?
- How do I demonstrate that I am leading others in prayer and not simply singing notes on a page?

As you work on matching pitch:

- Do I hear the notes in my head and match them accordingly, or am I guessing at them?

As you record your selected repertoire:

- Please *don't* play to the camera. Engage with the people that you are leading in prayer. We want to see how you interact and engage with your 'congregation.'
- Please keep in mind that adjudicators recognize that tapes are recorded under artificial conditions, and that you might feel more comfortable in an actual liturgy. Nevertheless, do your best to engage authentically with the group that you are leading and allow yourself to communicate prayerfully, clearly, and expressively.

We encourage you to seek outside assistance for your self-assessment, as well as your progress in preparing for the BCC.