

BASIC CANTOR CERTIFICATE

TEN FAQs

KATHERINE LEDUC

Q 1. What is the Basic Cantor Certificate?

The Basic Cantor Certificate is an acknowledgment that a candidate has fulfilled the minimum requirements for serving as a competent cantor, that is, leading psalmody and litanies, teaching music, and demonstrating basic knowledge about music and the liturgy.

Q 2. What exactly is involved in the exam?

There are three portions to the performance exam. The first is leading psalmody and litanies; it requires the candidate to lead two psalms from our list of acceptable psalms for the exam—one in chant style and one more melodic. This section also includes leading a Lamb of God litany. The second section is teaching music, and the candidate is expected to teach a memorial acclamation and *Amen* from a list of four or five different Masses. The final part of the test includes a series of intervals to be sung back after they have been played on a piano or organ. There is also a written exam consisting of basic musical information and a question designed to test the candidate on basic information about the liturgy.

Q 3. Where can I find acceptable repertoire for the exam?

The registration form (which can be found on page four and at <http://www.npm.org/Sections/Cantor/cantorcertification.htm>) lists the acceptable repertoire and sources for the music. Most parishes will have

access to one or more of the sources.

Q 4. The exam requirements say I need a proctor. What is a proctor?

A proctor is a person—preferably a member of the Director of Music Ministries Division (DMMD) of NPM—who certifies that the candidate has followed the rules of the test. This person provides a written acknowledgement that the rules have been followed. This person may or may not be your accompanist for the exam.

Q 5. Where do I find a proctor?

Since we prefer to have DMMD members as proctors, the best place to start looking for a proctor is your local (or closest) NPM chapter. Your chapter officers should know who the DMMD members are in your chapter and diocese. If you don't have a chapter in your diocese, you may contact me, and I will try to locate some DMMD members in your area and provide contact information. I do not contact the proctors for you; this is your responsibility. If a DMMD member cannot be found, it is possible to use another NPM member.

Q 6. What are the technical requirements of the exam?

You must provide a standard VHS or DVD recording of your exam. If you use a compact VHS tape, you must send an adaptor along with it. The taping should be continuous, that is, it should include the A list psalm, the B list psalm, the litany, the teaching, and the intervals. All should be taped without interruption—the camera should keep running.

Q 7. Where should I go for the recording?



It is helpful to do the recording in the environment where you are most comfortable—the parish where you normally perform the office of cantor. However, you may not make this recording at a regularly scheduled service, since the testing is not designed for that situation. It is suggested that you gather a small “assembly”—perhaps the other cantors in your parish, your parish choir, or your spouse and kids—to allow you to have someone to respond to the psalms and so you have someone to teach the music to.

Q 8. Who are the adjudicators?

The adjudicators are members of the Standing Committee for Cantors and some other nationally or regionally known cantors with many years of experience with the office of cantor.

Q 9. How long does the process take?

Though we had some significant delays in returning responses for some of the earlier submissions, the process of adjudication is generally completed within five to six months of the time we receive your submission.

Q 10. Finally: Who do I talk to if I still have questions?

Katherine LeDuc. E-mail: kathyleduc1@yahoo.com; phone: (906) 786-5157. ☺