

Self-Assessment Tips to Help You Prepare

Below are criteria to help you assess your skills as you prepare for the Basic Cantor Certificate. We encourage you to seek outside assistance to help you assess.

In leading psalms and litanies:

- How does my voice help the assembly to pray? How might it distract?
- Do I announce clearly so as to be 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 synch with the music?
- How well do the music director or accompanist and I communicate both in a liturgy and outside of it?
- Do I chant with rhythm or pacing similar to speech or do I “over-sing” it?
- Do I understand the texts that I am singing and how do I communicate them?
- Is my face active when I sing or am I expressionless?
- How do I make eye contact with people when I sing?
- How do my gestures invite 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?

In matching pitch:

- Do I hear the notes in my head and match them accordingly or am I guessing at them?
- Please don’t play to the camera. Engage with the people that you are leading in prayer. We want to see how you do that.
- Please keep in mind that adjudicators recognize that tapes are recorded under artificial conditions and 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.

Joe Simmons