

Parking Lot

What is the purpose of this activity?

Often in a workshop or meeting people will have questions, ideas or concerns that are not directly related to the current discussion. They may be hesitant to ask them in front of the whole group. The Parking Lot gives participants a place to post their questions and ideas for discussion at a later date.

How do I do this activity?

As part of the housekeeping and/or establishment of working agreements introduce the Parking Lot by sharing the following information:

In order to meet all learning needs we have a Parking Lot. If you have a question, thought, idea or concern you would like us to know but it's not the right time or you don't want to ask it out loud - write it on a post-it-note and put it on Parking Lot. We will review and answer them throughout the session.

Hints:

If no one put up anything in the first hour or so, do one yourself then answer publicly like it is anonymous.

If someone asks a question you can't or don't want to answer at the moment, ask them to write it on a post-it-note and put on the Parking Lot.

If you don't know the answer to the question, open it up to the audience and ask them what they think or know. You might want to do this even if you do know the answer. It helps participants understand that they are their own best resources.

What are some variations of this activity?

- ☆ Choose a fun poster or drawing or something you want people to notice for the Parking Lot. You may want to laminate the chart so it can be used more than once.
- ☆ For large groups, you may want to have a Parking Lot in each corner of the room or at each table.
- ☆ If you are dealing with a sensitive issue you may want the Parking Lot to be more like a suggestion box.
- ☆ Sometimes it is fun to hang the chart on an angle. It helps get peoples' attention and it avoids having them a little crooked-which may drive people crazy!
- ☆ In addition to putting post-it-notes at each table, attach a small stack to the chart.
- ☆ If you do not have post-it-notes, use little pads or cut outs on each table and hang a strip of masking tape near the chart.

When would I use this activity?

- Entering Procedure
- Opener
- Icebreaker
- Team Builder
- Energizer
- Content
- Assessment/Evaluation
- Management
- Closing Activity

Time to introduce: 5 minutes

Preparation: make chart that says Parking Lot and place post-it-notes on every table or place

Performance: depends on number of questions

Cleanup: none

Group size: any size

Material: chart pad and post-it-notes

Room Set-up: any

Notes/Questions to ponder: