

Asteroid Belt

The Asteroid Belt does not have a sign in this model, however many people are intrigued by this collection of rocky debris.

It is believed that these asteroids are small chunks of material left over from the formation of the solar system. In the case of these asteroids the debris never formed into a large enough planetesimal (body) to form a full planet. In fact, if all the asteroids were put together to form a single body it would not be as large as our Moon. However, their small size leads to another interesting twist in the theory for the solar system formation.

The asteroids, being smaller, formed completely very early in the solar system history. Therefore they give us a clue as to what conditions existed before the solar system formed. Chemical evidence from meteorites, which generally originate from asteroids, indicates that a supernova explosion occurred shortly before formation of our solar system began. It is considered very likely therefore, that this supernova explosion triggered the formation of our solar system.

(From <http://wind.cc.whecn.edu/~marquard/astronomy/solar%20system.htm>)

If you are interested in learning more about the asteroid belt located between Mars and Jupiter, you can find more information in books or on the internet.

